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SERMONS: OUTLINES: ILLUSTRATIONS

FOR THE SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

OF THE YEAR

Original and Selected

THE SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY—TEN TO TWENTY-FIVE

THIRD EDITION



London

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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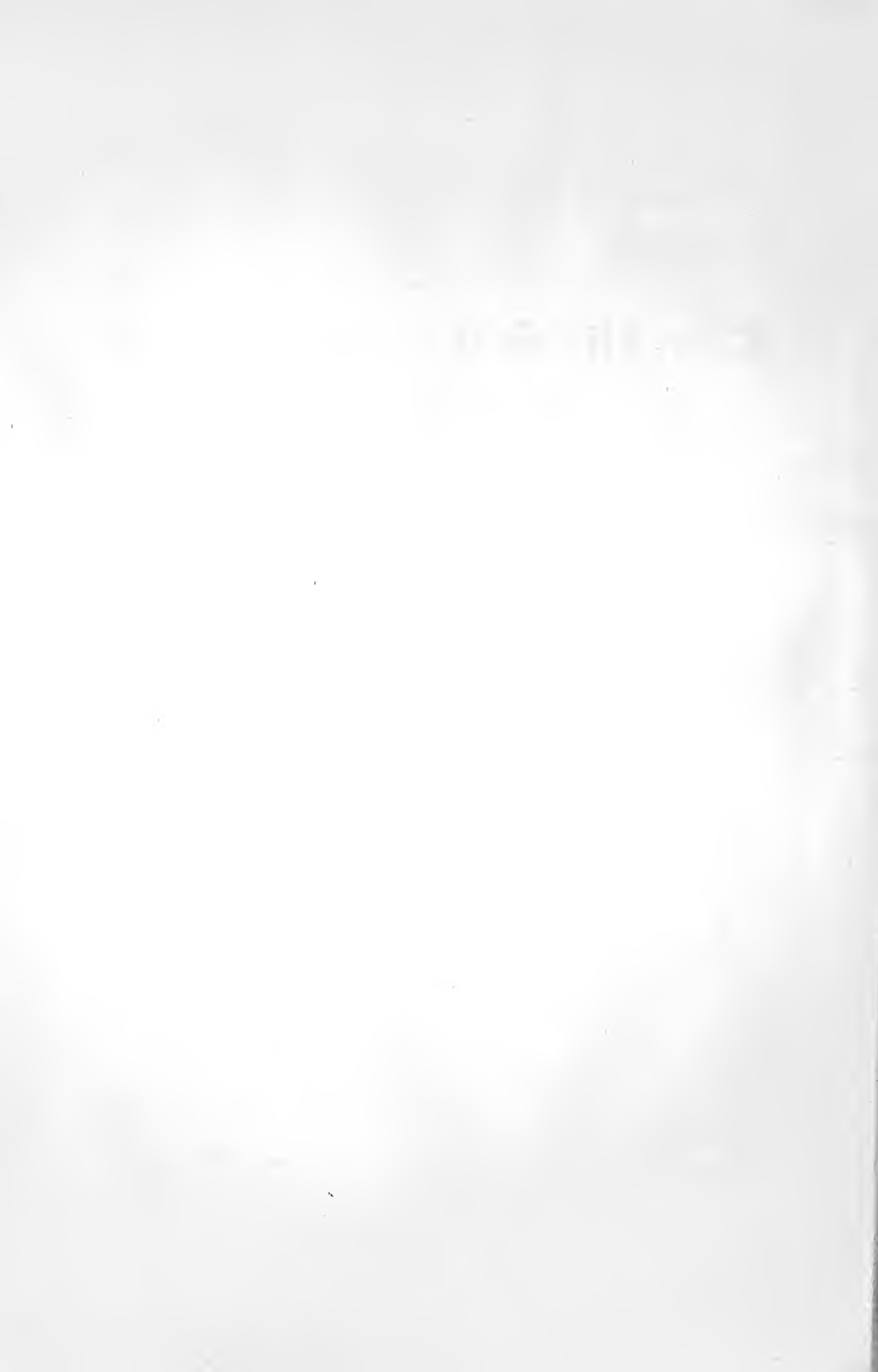
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Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, 1 CORINTHIANS XII. 1-11.
GOSPEL, S. LUKE XIX. 41-46.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . . 1 KINGS XII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . . 1 KINGS XII. OR 1 KINGS XVII.
SECOND LESSON, ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Cleansing the Temple.

And He went into the temple, and began to cast them out that sold therein, and them that bought : saying, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves. S. LUKE xix. 45, 46.



DURING the course of His short earthly ministry our Lord Jesus Christ twice cleansed the Temple of the traffic that took place within its courts. S. John describes the first occasion, which he places just after the wedding at Cana in Galilee, when our Lord went up to Jerusalem to keep His first Pass-over after His entrance on His ministry; and the second occasion is narrated by the three first evangelists, by S. Matthew, perhaps, most fully, by S. Luke, as in the text, most briefly. This last occasion took place immediately after the public entry into Jerusalem; as S. Mark's account would seem to imply, on the following morning. The close of the ministry of the Son of Man was to be marked by a solemn act corresponding to that at its commencement.

And here let us observe in passing, that it is impossible to treat

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the narrative in S. John's as referring to the same event as that described by the three first gospels, without supposing that the fourth evangelist had, for purposes of his own, torn away this episode from its true place at the close of our Lord's life, and placed it at the commencement. Those who have gone so far as to maintain this, contend that it is very improbable that an event of such marked character should have twice occurred within a short lifetime; but not to insist on the unwisdom of settling beforehand what was or was not likely in such a life as our Lord's, let us observe that the action itself, and the language used by our Lord, are reported to have varied very significantly on the two occasions, while the recurrence of the circumstance which provoked our Lord's act on the first occasion would have led Him to repeat it on the second. He could not without inconsistency condone at the close of His ministry what He had rebuked at its opening. Just as similar cases of disease led Him more than once to repeat a miracle, just as similar faults or errors or forms of ignorance in His hearers led Him to utter in a late discourse words which He had already employed in an earlier one, so when in full view of His approaching death, He beheld within the Temple courts the same unhallowed traffic which had met His eye in the first year of His ministry, He acted in the main as He had acted before; He drove the buyers and sellers from the sacred precincts; and those who believe that every event, the least as well as the greatest, in the life of the Son of God upon earth was pre-arranged for the instruction, for the edification of the world, will feel that this solemn repetition of an act of severity and judgment shows it to have some very emphatic lessons which it is our duty to consider.

The occasion presented itself, as I have said, naturally. Arrived at Jerusalem, our Lord, it has been well observed, once more treads the path, which He loved as a child, up to the Temple. In the outer court, He finds a brisk trade going on around Him. Nothing is said on this occasion of the sale of oxen and sheep for sacrifice, which S. John mentions at the earlier date; but there were stands of doves, much in request for trespass, for sin, for burnt offerings, since the poor were allowed to present them instead of the costlier lamb, or kid; and there were the money-changers, who must have had very constant occupation, for every Israelite, in whatever station of life, when he had passed the age of twenty, was bound by the law to pay a half-shekel into the sacred treasury whenever the nation was numbered, and this tax seems, in the course of time, to have become annual. This tribute had to be paid in the exact Hebrew half-shekel, worth about fifteenpence halfpenny of our money, and the premium upon the exchange of foreign money for this sum was a coin which was worth about threehalfpence. But the money-brokers

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of our Lord's time had no notion of contenting themselves with this small commission. Jews came to them from all parts of the world who were obliged to make their offering in the Hebrew coin, and they only supplied the necessary half-shekel for the largest sum that, after driving a bargain, they could possibly exact. It was these fraudulent brokers, no doubt, who chiefly moved our Lord's indignation. He passed rapidly along the court, upsetting their tables, money and all, one after another. He then overturned the dove-stands, and finally, by a mere exercise of His moral authority, He drove the whole company of bargainers, buyers and sellers alike, out from the Temple courts; and in doing this He appealed, as to a word of decisive authority, to an utterance of the great prophet Isaiah, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' 'Instead of that,' He sternly exclaimed, 'ye have made it a den of robbers.'

In contemplating this action, we are at first startled by its peremptoriness. 'Is this,' we say to ourselves, 'is this He who is called the Lamb of God? He of whom prophecy said that He should neither strive nor cry; He who said of Himself, "Come to Me; I am meek and lowly of heart"? Is there not the same incongruity between that meek and gentle character and those vehement acts and words?' No, there is no incongruity. As the anger which is divorced from meekness is but unsanctified passion, so the false meekness which can never kindle at the sight of wrong into indignation, is closely allied, depend upon it, to moral collapse. One of the worst things that the inspired Psalmist can find it in his heart to say of a man is, 'Neither doth he abhor anything that is evil.' Bishop Butler has shown that anger, being a part of our natural constitution, is intended by our Maker to be excited, to be exercised upon certain legitimate objects; and the reason why anger is as a matter of fact generally sinful is, because it is generally wielded, not by our sense of absolute right and truth, but by our self-love, and therefore, on wrong and needless occasions. Our Lord's swift indignation was just as much a part of His perfect sanctity as was His silent meekness in the hour of His Passion.

We may dare to say it, that He could not, being Himself, have been silent in that Temple court, for that which met His eye was an offence first against the eighth commandment of the Decalogue. The money brokers, we have seen, were habitually fraudulent; but then this does not explain His treatment of the sellers of the doves, which shows that He saw in the whole transaction an offence against the first and second commandments. All irreverence is really when we get to the bottom of it unbelief. The first great truth that we know is the solitary supremacy of the Eternal God; the second,

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which is its consequence, the exacting character of His love. God is said, in the second commandment, to be a 'jealous God.' In a man, jealousy, impatience of rival claims, impatience of a divided love in another, is, as we know, anything but lovely or moral; and one reason for our condemning it is that no one human heart has in justice any right to the undivided homage of another heart. Of course I know that on certain occasions people use passionate and exaggerated language which might very well imply the contrary; but in morality and fact no man, no woman, may claim all the affections and thoughts of any other man or woman; but that which is a grave fault in a finite and created being like man is anything but a blemish, it is a strict moral necessity, in the divine character. God has, while man has not, a literal right to the undivided homage of His creatures. As the end no less than the author of our being, as containing within Himself all perfections, as being the highest, the consummate good, God has a right to, not a part, but the whole affection of every reasonable being that He has created. He would disclaim His own affection if He could claim less than the whole. His exacting love, which has wandered forth from the glories of heaven to the cradle of Bethlehem and to the Cross of Calvary in quest of the soul of man, would be untrue to man's best interest, no less than to its own beauty and supremacy, if it could consent to share its claims on the human heart with any creature whatever. And this was the deepest meaning of our Lord's protests against the traffic in the Temple. Though that traffic seemed to have a semi-religious purpose, it was in reality irreligious. It was, you observe, the substitution within those walls of another interest for that interest of which the Temple was the symbol and guardian. 'My house shall be called a house—not of commerce, not of semi-sacred commerce—but of prayer. It has for its object Me, and Me alone. You are robbing not merely your fellow-creatures of their substance, but Me of My glory. Ye have made it a den of thieves.'

I. The application of this action and language of our Lord must detain us a little longer. 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' The Jewish Temple is, in the Bible, first of all a figure of the whole Church of the redeemed. The faithful S. Peter says, 'A spiritual house.' They are Christ's house, says S. Paul, over which as the Son He is set. 'Ye are the temple of God.' S. Paul says plainly to the Corinthians, 'The temple of God is holy: which temple ye are.' Of this spiritual house, Christ is the chief cornerstone; the Apostles and the Prophets are the foundation; and day by day, and year by year, souls are being built into its walls, or, in Scripture language, edified; and when its predestined proportions have been attained, then the end will come. This vast

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organised edifice of souls, to which all ages and countries of the world, the living and the dead, alike contribute, touches us in the shape of the militant or visible Church, which is only, you observe, a fragment of a mighty whole that stretches back into the past, that stretches away into the unseen. 'Ye are come,' says the Apostle, by being Christians, 'ye are come,' at your conversion, not merely to such and such congregations, bishops, pastors to meet your eye; but 'ye are come unto Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; to God, the judge of all; to the spirits of the just made perfect; to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' And of this house it is true that 'My house shall be called the house of prayer for all the nations.' For this it was constructed, as its leading idea and purpose, the maintenance of a vast and an uninterrupted communion with the eternal source of life.

And this is as true of that portion of the holy body which we call the Church visible or militant, as it is of the rest. The object of the visible Church is not solely philanthropic, although the Church's duty is to do good unto all men, specially to them that are of the household of faith. It is not solely the moral perfection of its members, although the purification to Himself of a peculiar people zealous of good works was certainly a main object of its Founder; still less is it the prosecution of inquiry or speculation, however interesting, about God, because we already know all that we ever really shall know in this state about Him. We have on our lips and in our hearts the faith that was once delivered to the saints. This temple, visible and invisible, is thus organised by its Divine Founder throughout earth and heaven to be a whole of ceaseless communion with God; and as its heavenly members never, never for one moment cease in their blessed work, so by prayers, broken though they be and interrupted, by prayers and intercessions, by thanksgiving and praise, private and public, mental and vocal, the holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge Him who is the common centre of light and love to all its members, whether on this side the veil or beyond it.

Into this temple also there sometimes intrudes that which moves the anger of the Son of Man, for this spiritual society has its place among men. It is in the world, although not of it, and it thus sometimes admits within its courts that which cannot bear the glance of the All-Holy. And especially is this apt to be the case when the Church of Christ has been for many ages bound up with the life and history of a great nation, and is, what we call in modern language, established, that is to say, recognised by the State, and secured in its

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property and position by legal enactments. I am far from denying that this state of things is or may be a very great blessing, that it secures to religion a prominence and a consideration among the people at large, which would else be wanting to it, that it visibly asserts before men the true place of God as the ruler and guide of national destiny; but it is also undeniable that such a state of things may bring with it danger from which less favoured churches escape. To be forewarned, let us trust, is to be forearmed; but whenever it happens to a great church, or to its guiding minds, to think more of the secular side of its position than they think of the spiritual, more, it may be, of a seat in the Senate and of high social rank, than of the work of God among the people; if, in order to save income and position in times of real and supposed peril, there is any willingness to barter away the safeguards of the faith, or to silence the pleadings of generosity and justice in deference to some uninstructed clamour, then be sure that, unless history is at fault as well as Scripture, we may listen for the footfalls of the Son of Man on the outer threshold of the temple, and we shall not listen long in vain. Churches are disestablished and disendowed to the eye of sense, through the action of political parties; to the eye of faith by His interference who ordereth all things both in heaven and in earth, and who rules at this moment on the same principles as those which of old led Him to cleanse His Father's Temple in Jerusalem.

II. 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' Here, too, is a law for the furniture and equipment; here is a definition of the object and purpose of a material Christian church. There are great differences, no doubt, between the Jewish Temple and a building dedicated to Christian worship; but over the portals of each there might be traced with equal propriety the words, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' No well-instructed, no really spiritual Christian thinks of his parish church mainly or chiefly as a place for hearing sermons. Sermons are of great service, especially when people are making their first acquaintance with practical Christianity, and they occupy so great a part in the Acts of the Apostles, because they were of necessity the instrument with which the first teachers of Christianity made their way among unconverted Jews and heathens. Nay, more, since amid the importunities of this world of sense and time the soul of man is constantly tending to close its eyes to the unseen, to the dangers which on every side beset it, to the pre-eminent claim of its Redeemer and its God, sermons which repeat with unwearying earnestness the same solemn certainties about God and man, about the person and work and gifts of Christ, about life and death, about the fleeting present and the endless future, are a vital feature in the activity of every Christian Church, a means of calling

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the unbelieving and the careless to the foot of the Cross, a means of strengthening and edifying the faithful. Still, if a comparison is to be instituted between prayers and sermons, there ought not to be a moment's doubt as to the decision; for it is not said 'My house shall be called a house of preaching,' but 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' Surely it is a much more responsible act, and, let me add, it is a much greater privilege, to speak to God, whether in prayer or praise, than to listen to what a fellow-sinner can tell you about Him; and when a great congregation is really joining in worship, when there is a deep spiritual, as it were an electric, current of sympathy traversing a vast multitude of souls as they make one combined advance to the foot of the eternal throne, then, if we could look at these things for a moment with angels' eyes, we should see something infinitely greater, according to all the rules of a true spiritual measurement, than the effect of the most eloquent and the most persuasive of sermons.

'My house shall be called the house of prayer,' is a maxim for all time, and if this be so, then all that meets the eye, all that falls upon the ear within the sacred walls, should be in harmony with this high intention, should be valued and used only with a view to promoting it. Architecture, painting, mural decorations, and the like, are only in place when they lift the soul upwards towards the invisible, when they conduct it swiftly and surely to the gates of the world of spirits, and then themselves retire from thought and from view. Music the most pathetic, the most suggestive, is only welcome in the temples of Christ when it gives wings to spiritualised thought and feeling, when it promotes the ascent of the soul to God. If these beautiful arts detain men on their own account, to wonder at their own intrinsic charms, down among the things of sense; if we are thinking more of music than of Him whose glory it heralds, more of the beauty of form and colour than of Him whose temple it adorns, then be sure we are robbing God of His glory, we are turning His temple into a den of thieves.

No error is without its element of truth, and jealousy on this point was the strength of Puritanism, which made it a power notwithstanding its violence, notwithstanding its falsehood. And as for purely secular conversations within these walls, how unworthy are they in view of our Redeemer's words! Time was, under the two first Stuarts, when the nave of the old S. Paul's was a rendezvous for business, for pleasure, for public gossiping, so that Evelyn the diarist, lamenting the deplorable state to which the great church was reduced, says that it was already named a den of thieves. Is it too much to say that the Redeemer was not long in punishing the desecration of His temple? First there came the axes and hammers of

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the Rebellion, and then there came the swift tongues of fire in 1660, and the finest cathedral that England ever saw went its way. Would that in better times we were less constantly unmindful of the truth that its successor is neither a museum of sculpture nor yet a concert room, and that He whose house it is will not be robbed of His rights with permanent impunity.

III. 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' This is true, lastly, of every regenerate soul. When it is in a state of grace the soul of man is a temple of the divine presence. 'If any man love Me and will keep My words, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.' Christ's throne within the soul enlightens the understanding, and kindles the affections, and braces the will, and while He thus from His presence-chamber in this His spiritual palace issues His orders hour by hour to its thinking and acting powers, He receives in return the homage of faith and love, a sacrifice which they delight to present to Him. So is it with God's true servants, but alas! if you and I compare notes, what shall we say? Even when we desire to pray we find ourselves in the outer court of the soul surrounded all at once with the tables of the money-changers, and with the seats of the men who sell the doves. Our business, with all its details, follows us into our private chambers, follows us everywhere into the presence of our God. Our preparations for religious service, the accidents of our service, occupy the attention which is due to the service itself. Sometimes, alas, we do not even try to make the very first steps towards real prayer, and steps which ordinary natural reverence would suggest; we lounge, we look about us, just as though nothing in the world were of less importance than to address the Infinite and Eternal God. But sometimes, alas, we do close the eyes, we do bend the knee, we try to put force upon the soul's power and faculties, and to lead them forth one by one, and then collectively to the footstool of the King of Kings; when, lo! they linger over this memory or that, they are burdened with this or that load of care, utterly foreign to the work in hand. They bend, it is true, in an awkward sort of way in the sacred presence beneath, not their sense of its majesty, not their sense of the love and the beauty of God, but the vast and incongruous weight of worldliness which prevents their realising it. And when a soul is thus at its best moments fatally troubled and burdened about many things, God in His mercy bides His time: He cleanses the courts of a temple which He has predestined to be His for ever, He cleanses it in His own time and way; He sends some sharp sorrow which sweeps from the soul all thoughts save one, the nothingness, the vanity of all that is here below; and so He forces that soul to turn by one mighty, all-comprehending act to Himself, who alone

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can satisfy it, or He lays a man upon a bed of sickness, leaving the mind with all its powers intact, but stripping from the body all the faculties of speech and motion, and then through the long weary hours the man is turned in upon himself; and if there is any hope for him at all, if at that critical moment he is at all alive to the tender pleadings of the All-merciful, he will with his own hands cleanse the temple; he sees the paltriness of the trifles that have kept him back from his chiefest, from his only good; he expels first one and then another unworthy intruder upon the sacred ground. The scourge is sharp, the resistance it may be is persevering; the hours are long, and they are weary, but the work is done at last. 'No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, yet at the last it bringeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.'

Let us pray for grace lest we should need this scourge; let us pray for grace that, if we do need, we should welcome it. If religion means anything at all, it is an awful, it is an absorbing reality; if attention to its duties have any claim upon our power, that claim is far too serious to admit of rivalry or of interruption. Let us be sure that, in this solemn matter, what is worth doing at all is worth the very best effort that we can possibly give it; and that, for the rest, if we earnestly ask Him, God will so cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that even here we may perfectly love Him and worthily magnify His Holy Name, through Jesus Christ.

H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

'The Lord's Supper, and Trust in a Living Redeemer.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 1 CORINTHIANS xii. 4-6.



GREAT German theologian thus speaks of the sacred ceremonies of all religion, in discussing the ordinances which belonged to the ancient people of Israel. 'Every religion,' he says, 'has some few usages in which she seeks to comprehend her entire significance and spirit. These are the sacred rites by us usually termed sacraments, and their existence is quite inevitable; for while every religion, particularly every elevated religion, starts from some

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few fundamental truths, but finds her fulfilment and goal only in life and action, she has still a craving to put forth again her whole contents in some few usages, and cling to these as eternally valid as and for the whole world. These symbolical ordinances have their origin in the inexhaustible vitality of the religion to which they belong, and serve to propagate and renew its significance and spirit.' Such an ordinance in Christianity is, above all, that which, in common parlance, is called the Sacrament, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

I propose, first, to glance very briefly at the various forms under which it has been celebrated, and then to speak of the inward essence of this truth which alone can give it light and meaning and use. Since it was first established, it has gone through every sort of outward change. It has sometimes been received by all Christians every day, as in the Early Church. It has been sometimes received, even by devout Christians, as in Russia and in Scotland, only once or three times a year. It has been received sometimes, as in the Early Church, and by some amongst ourselves, in the evening, by the larger part of Christendom in the morning. It has been received lying, standing, sitting, kneeling. The elements have been administered sometimes, as in early times, by the whole congregation; and sometimes, as in almost all later times, by the officiating clergy. It has been celebrated in some countries only by the solitary priest; in others only where hundreds are present. In the Eastern and in the Early Church it was given to infants: in the Western, and in all later times of the Western Church, only to persons of full years. It has been given in the Roman churches with bread alone, in the Protestant churches with bread and wine separately, in the Eastern churches with bread and wine mixed together. The wine has been sometimes given mixed with water, sometimes pure and simple. The bread has sometimes been leavened, sometimes unleavened; sometimes, as with us, in the form of a loaf; sometimes, as in the Roman and Lutheran churches, in the form of the wafer; sometimes, as by the Greeks, in the form of a roll. It has sometimes been celebrated with lights, sometimes without lights. It has been administered sometimes on a stone tomb, sometimes on a wooden table. Sometimes the table has been called an altar; at other times the altar has been called a table. Sometimes the table has been placed, as with us, at the east end of the church; sometimes, as in the Roman Church, at the west end; sometimes, as in the Early Church, in the middle. Sometimes it has been placed lengthwise, sometimes breadthwise. Sometimes, like the Pope of Rome, and as in the Presbyterian churches, the minister stands behind the table; sometimes with us at the end of the table, sometimes in front. Sometimes it has been administered in the plain

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dress of common life, as by the early Christians and some nonconformists; sometimes in stated robes; sometimes in white; sometimes in black.

Now, these variations, which we can trace back to their origin, have a historical instruction. Some of them may be irreconcilable the one with the other. Some are mere variations of form and time—mere questions of name and words; but they are all more or less compatible with the spiritual realities which, whether within the Sacrament or out of the Sacrament, are the only matters of importance. Let us see what these are.

I. First, it is, by all Christians, understood to be a more solemn confession of their Christian convictions than they make at other times. Those who communicate, whatever else they intend, do thereby declare themselves for the time to be better servants of God—more anxious to do their duty—more anxious to part with their sins. We need not say that all communicants are better than those who are not communicants. Many, perhaps, who never communicate at all will sit down at the marriage feast of the Lamb in higher places than those who have communicated all their lives; but still it is a witness to the invisible Church within the visible, to a standard of life and of things higher than that to which the ordinary world has attained. We renew our pledge. We make our profession, our sacrifice of themselves. In this sense only it is called in our Church a sacrifice. It is this which makes any outward compulsion so entirely contrary to its intention. It is this which made the Sacrament of so many hundred years ago, as a test, so thoroughly repulsive. 'The reception of the Sacrament,' says an eminent modern historian, 'has fortunately never been made,' to any great extent, 'a requirement of the social code, and, consequently has, for the most part, been left to sincere and earnest believers. Something of the fervour, something of the deep sincerity of the early Christians,' so he adds, with touching pathos, 'may even now be seen around the sacred table; and prayers are felt to be instinct with the deepest and most solemn emotion, and may be used there without appearing blasphemous by their contrast with the tone and demeanour of ordinary worshippers.'

II. Secondly, it is the expression of the largest forbearance and charity towards all men. Every one who wishes to partake of it is invited to partake of it. Friends or enemies, agreeing or disagreeing—all are urged to come. In our own Church, at least, no one but scandalous evil livers, or those who have an implacable quarrel, are dissuaded from coming. No member of any other church is excluded. No man is kept away because he is scrupulous, or hesitating, or heterodox, or schismatical, or a Greek, or a Roman, or Lutheran or

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a Presbyterian. As far as we are concerned, we are, in this respect, in communion with the whole of England, and with the whole of Christendom. We do not partake alone; we partake with others; and this is the real meaning of the word 'communion.' In the original, it is not only partaking, but joint partaking. It is communion with others, communion, as I have just said, with the whole of Christendom in idea, but also specially with our own friends, with our own households, reminding us of our duty to them, and of theirs to us. They, according to S. Paul, are the body of Christ, with whom we communicate. We are God to them, and they to us.

III. Thirdly, it is a thanksgiving—a Eucharist: that is the meaning of the word 'Eucharist.' It is a thanksgiving for all the blessings that we have received. In the Early Church the thanksgiving was chiefly for the fruits of the earth, which the corn and the wine represented; but it includes our gratitude for all the blessings of life, for our restored or continued health, for our home, for our friends, living or departed, who have helped us along the weary path of life, for our English birth and education, for our knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, for the sunshine cast over this dark world and the next by the blessed hope of immortality which this day brings before us. The Eucharist is the contemplation of the human feeling of gratitude.

IV. Fourthly, it is also the consecration of memory. In former days there used to be long disputings by what means in the Sacrament the presence and the thought of Christ were brought near to us. Some believed that it was by the magical transformation of the bread and wine through the hand of the priest. Some believed that it was through the effect of the imagination on the part of the communicant; but one of the clearest and keenest sighted of the reformers rightly shows that the chief means by which this thanksgiving, the communion, the sacrifice of the ordinance, were brought home to Christians was by memory, by remembrance of what had been, by the remembrance of the experiences and the blessings of our own lives, above all, by the remembrance of the original Last Supper, and of Him who founded it. And this is what is directly expressed in His own words: 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' Whatever else the Sacrament may be, it is, as it is called in the English Prayer Book, 'a perpetual memory,' or memorial. The Last Supper, the account of the Last Supper, is a part of the gospel story which you may be quite sure is absolutely and unquestionably quite historical, never contested by any one, related in one of the earliest books of the New Testament long before any of the gospels were written, in the first Epistle of S. Paul to the Corinthians. It is the most authentic monument of our Saviour's life and death, and it carries with it,

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more or less, the whole history of the Passion, and the whole mind of Jesus Christ as represented therein. Remember this, and you will remember quite enough to reconstruct the essentials of Christianity. For, further, this is why the Lord's Supper is so peculiarly Christian, and so peculiarly good for us, that by our serious frame of mind, by our union with each other, by our gratitude, by our memory, it brings before us the truth, that the main object of the religion of Jesus Christ is to make us like Him. There is no other communion with Christ, except through His Spirit, and through partaking of His character. Whatever books, whatever examples, whatever events, better enable us to understand our duty and our destiny, better enable us to understand God's will in grace; and God's will in nature, these, whatsoever they are, are the true companions to the altar. These will enable us better to conceive what is that moral and intellectual attraction, which is the mind of Jesus Christ, which ought to be the ambition of humanity, and which is the image of divinity.

'O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads us to the Lamb !'

A. P. STANLEY.

Diversity and Toleration.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all. I CORINTHIANS xii. 4-6 (R.V.).

I. **T**HE Corinthian squabble is a test specimen of a constantly recurring crisis in the gradual realisation of the true relation between man and man and between man and God; epidemics of keen divergence of opinion occur at intervals when denunciations hurtle through the air, when rivals depreciate each other's gifts of oratory, statesmanship, or administration, as mere dishonest charlatany. For a little while the battle rages, cleavages seem unpassable, and then time the healer brings death the emancipator, and the used-up machines of the great men who have denounced each other's gifts, are brought here to this 'temple of silence and reconciliation,' where side by side they rest; their epitaphs bearing witness to the inspired declarations, 'differences of administration, but the same spirit,' and the homage rendered equally to all illustrating the patent common-sense fact that if we would roll the old chariot of the world along, some must find the break-power while others do the pulling,

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and that diversity in operation is not necessarily contradiction in aim.

How wise, how elevating is the judgment of S. Paul! 'How dare any of you,' he would say, 'depreciate in another, or exaggerate in yourselves, a single gift that you possess? Know that all bodily endowments, all mental strength and beauty, all clearness of perception, all spiritual gifts, flow from one and the self-same source.' 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.' The earth education of man is not designed to be a battle-ground for jealous individuals, but the training-school of a race brotherhood, in which 'each should do for all what he alone does best.' In the unfolding of the Father's purpose the gift of each is needful for the whole. To perfect the social order each must live and labour for the brotherhood of man. 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,' for all gifts are perverted, degraded, misused, if not consecrated by the Love that 'never faileth' and that 'seeketh not her own.'

II. In its broadest application the verdict of the Apostle delivers us from the narrow-mindedness of erecting false and artificial barriers of distinction between nature and grace, the spiritual and the secular, as though there were a separate deity for each department of creation. The world's Father cannot be thus analysed into departments and divided against Himself. The eternal distinction which appeals to man's volition and instinct of sonship is not between nature and grace, but between right and wrong. All that is sweetest and noblest in music, painting, architecture, all that is truest and best in poetry, literature, science, comes from the Father of Lights. 'There is one body'—the universe—and 'one spirit'—the divine evolving intelligence within it.

Humanity is the body of God, the Church is the heart of that body, and we are the Church. We, each one of us personally, are possessors of some gift, some conviction, some insight, some facility, some advantage, some quality of heart, which is ours in trust for the body. Our gift is the measure of our responsibility and the obligation of our serviceableness to the race. Be careful lest in the haste and fret and selfishness of life you fail to minister your gifts one to another as good stewards of the mysteries of God. Be appreciative, tolerant, receptive towards your brother's gift, though you may be unable to see exactly how it fits in with your own mode of acting and thinking.

III. And, further, carry this thought of the working of the self-same Spirit boldly into your estimate of God's government of the world. The fearful puzzles around you are not really contradictions.

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Only love God, and all things work together for good. 'Standeth God behind the shadow.' Behind the jarring of the creeds, behind the hostilities of parties, behind the misery of the many, behind the dark shadow of life's educative discipline, 'standeth God.' We cannot fit it all now. One day we shall know that it could not have been otherwise, and that all is not in spite of, but because of, His love. On every Mussulman's tombstone in India are inscribed the words 'He remaineth.' Yes, He remaineth. If the religion of Islam can thus recognise the unchangeableness of God, the religion of Christ should write large on every Christian heart, 'He remaineth'; 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

CANON WILBERFORCE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Lost Opportunity.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. S. LUKE xix. 41, 42.



LET us apply the incidents of the passage to the case of our own spiritual advantages by considering first the opportunity given, then the opportunity limited, and lastly, the opportunity lost.

I. Let us dwell first on the opportunity given. 'If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace.' What are the things, the saving knowledge of which belongs to our peace?

1. First, it is to know Christ, His name—the Prince of Peace, His covenant—the covenant of peace, His revelation—the Gospel of Peace; it is the bond of peace used to bind all believers in sweet communion, and a legacy of peace was His last, best gift to His Church; He is our peace, enmities are abolished by Him, partition walls are broken down by Him, He blots out the handwriting of ordinances by His Blood, He makes all thing blameless by His righteousness; He makes peace, secures peace, purchased peace, to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh.

2. But in order to this saving knowledge in Christ, repentance and faith are necessary, and both these are things which belong unto our peace—repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus

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Christ.' God will speak peace to His people and to His saints, says the Psalmist, but it is upon one condition, 'Let them not turn again to their folly.' But repentance is not the only thing that belongs to our peace, neither by itself would it ever give us peace. It may show that we are no longer disaffected towards God, that we desire no more to trample on His laws, and to be no more disloyal to His throne; but repentance is no expiation, it atones for no insult, it removes no curse, it opens no prison doors, it pledges God to no determination; it just shows that we are willing to avail ourselves of forgiveness if a suitable propitiation be found. Hence the other chief thing which belongs to our peace is faith, faith in Christ. The covenant we make with God is by sacrifice, and faith in this sacrifice propitiates all His ancient displeasure. 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

II. But I pass on to the consideration of our second point, on the opportunity limited, 'If thou hadst known in this thy day.' The words plainly imply that in extending to men the offers of salvation, heaven had special and favoured seasons, times when these offers are pressed upon them with peculiar earnestness, or are accompanied with more than ordinary facilities for their acceptances, as 'In this thy day,' is the emphatic expression; and again, in the forty-fourth verse, 'Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation'; and S. Paul quotes from Isaiah, that sublime passage, 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' We cannot mistake such testimonies. They teach that both to nations and to individuals certain opportunities for repentance are afforded, which, as being specially easy to improve, it must involve special and aggravated guilt to neglect.

III. And this brings us to the last point we were to consider, or the opportunity lost, 'But now they are hid from thine eyes.' This suggests solemn thoughts. The image of the great teacher is still before us, of all spiritual opportunity being compared to a day, and we think of a man who has abused, or wasted, or slept away all his daylight hours, awakening to the remembrance of a great work to be done just as the sun goes down, but all is vain. The sun, whether of nature or of grace, knows the time of 'his going down'; and he who works not while it is called To-day will find that 'the night cometh when no man can work.' In regard to the way in which this Gospel day, this day of acceptance and salvation may be withdrawn from us, and the things belonging to our peace be hidden from our eyes, I cannot speak particularly; thus it may be that our means of grace may be withdrawn. Candlesticks may be removed from individuals as well as from churches, and by sickness, by removal by decaying

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faculties, by any or many of life's incidents, we may come to mourn the loss of those outward accessories to which instrumentality we had owed all our early awakenings, but these because they were not valued or were not used to profit, God suffered to be taken away. Or more awful possibility still, our day of grace may be departed because the Spirit of grace has departed. We must not forget this possibility, though there be not in the wide world one living soul of whom we would affirm it to be true. There is a sin unto death, there is a quenching of the Spirit, there is a resistance of the Holy Ghost unto final departure, there is a rebellion and vexing of that blessed agent until He turn and become our enemy. The what, the how, the when, the where, we draw a veil over these; suffice it that all uncherished convictions, all disregarded warnings, all triumphs obtained over our better impulses and holier thoughts tend that way, and are drawing the soul on by little and little to the points at which God severs eternally the day of all spiritual opportunity, and closes all our accepted time.

D. MOORE.

The Ignorance of the Soul.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. S. LUKE xix. 41, 42.

OUR Lord coming from Bethany had just turned an angle in the road crossing the Mount of Olives, and what a scene burst upon His view! Beyond the valley of the Kedron, which lay at His feet, there was the city of Jerusalem, its marble roofs flashing in the springtide sun. It was so beautiful that scene, and yet He burst into tears. What drew those tears? The fairest, yet saddest of all sights, man in his ignorance, ignorance of his end, of his opportunities, of his dangers.

I. Jerusalem was a fair type of a human soul, fair in its beauty, but ignorant:

1. Of its true future. It was to be the mother of nations as the birthplace of the Church, but it preferred its own petty pride in an unreal present. And like many a soul, chose present enjoyment instead of future glory.

2. Of its true happiness. The whole history of the nation had pointed to the coming of the Messiah as the climax of its hopes, and the restorer of peace and happiness, but they preferred the temporary peace of compromise with the civil power, and tried to find their happiness apart from Christ; so many an ignorant soul tries by

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truce with evil to obtain a false peace, that it may enjoy what the world can give.

3. Of its true friend. Christ came the friend of man, and they crucified Him, choosing in His stead, first Barabbas and then Cæsar. But Barabbas was a robber, and their friend and king whom they chose, Cæsar, battered down Jerusalem and crucified them. How like the human soul, thinking those are its friends who flatter it that they may ruin it, and forfeiting the friendship of God.

II. Again, Jerusalem, like the soul, was ignorant of its opportunities:

1. Of repenting. Now for the last time they had an opportunity of walking in the 'via purgativa.' Probably every soul that is lost was ignorant of its last call to repentance, and thought there would be another chance.

2. Of learning. Now for the last time they could tread the 'via illuminativa.' Christ had been teaching them for three years, the time of teaching was drawing to a close, so most souls mean to learn more about God and His revelation before they die.

3. Of grace. All our Lord's teaching to His Apostles in the last chapters of S. John was of the 'via unitiva,' the need of abiding in Him.

III. Yet again that city, like the soul, was ignorant of the dangers that threatened it:

1. The enemy at the gates, which our Lord foresaw and foretold, seemed so far off, so how little we realise the nearness to us of our spiritual foes.

2. Its own helplessness. Had it not strong walls? had it not successfully resisted many sieges? often withstood strong enemies? So sometimes we think that because we have broken the bonds of old temptations, we shall never be really conquered.

3. The eternity of its loss. Jerusalem had had its reverses before, but they had been but temporary, the longest, the captivity in Babylon, for seventy years. Eighteen hundred years have passed, but there has been no resurrection for the Jew. How little we grasp what the possibility of eternal loss means!

The sentence on Jerusalem, written by the hand of God, was 'they knew not the time of their visitation.' God grant it may not be written by the recording angel as the story of your soul.

H. G. MORTIMER.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

A Saviour's Sorrow for a City's Sins.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it. S. LUKE xix. 41.

‘**H**E beheld the city.’ The city which He is now beholding is not Jerusalem, it is London; London, you will say, with the kingdom of heaven visibly set up in its midst, with its churches and chapels, its hospitals and schools: its countless gathering points of Christian enterprise and Christian missions, London, therefore, a sight of joy to its Lord. London, we admit, is the capital of England, with very much in the past and present history to show that on it, as on Jerusalem of old, the special purpose of God has rested, in connection with His kingdom; but London, we must remind you, has another and darker picture presenting itself to Christ’s view: London, with its sharp and terrible contrasts and its increasing wealth, and side by side with that its increasing pauperism, its fulness of bread and its abundance of idleness here, its destitution and squalid misery there, its great crimes ever and anon coming to the surface and startling us with their horrors, its secret sins which, if we could look down into the depths, would probably startle us more; and underneath and amidst them and pervading them all, giving life to some, intensity to others—one sin, its intemperance, its excessive use of strong drink, the shame alike of our city and our land. It is on this sin, even as I believe that it is on this that Christ’s eye is resting to-night, that I would ask you to fix your attention for a few minutes.

I. He beholds the city. And London is but one of the many cities and towns in our land on which the same all-seeing eye is resting. In Liverpool, the head constable says in his report, ‘23,458 cases of drunkenness passed through the hands of the police during the past year, being an increase of nearly 4000 over the previous year. Of criminals who were proceeded with summarily or by indictment, 3342 males and 2300 females were habitual drunkards.’ In Edinburgh, in a very able report published on the state of the lapsed classes, the criminal, the abandoned, and the pauper, it was stated that all these numbered 45,000, one-fourth of the whole population. A large majority of paupers, nine-tenths, it was stated, could be shown to have become what they were by intemperance. Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and our larger towns throughout the kingdom, have each their own terrible figures to give: each, if the means of collecting them were at hand, to be reproduced in the smaller towns and villages throughout our land. Can you wonder that as the knowledge of

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these things broke upon a committee of the Lower House, in the midst of an extensive inquiry, it should have reported with the startled surprise of one who had been roughly awakened out of sleep, that drinking prevails to a frightful extent among the labouring classes; that it is not confined to the male population, or to persons of mature age, but that it is spreading to an alarming degree among women and the young; that it is found to fill our prisons, our workhouses, and our lunatic asylums and our penitentiaries; that it may be shown by accumulated and undeniable evidence to be sapping the foundations of our prosperity, blighting the future, and lowering the reputation of our country, and destroying at once its physical strength and its moral and religious life; and, again, that 'the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint,' and unless remedy be speedily and effectively applied, consequences the most disastrous to us as a people cannot be long averted?

II. Shall the Church of Christ own herself defeated in the contest, and destitute of all resources? Has Christian love lost its ingenuity, or Christian zeal its spirit of enterprise? No, never let our faith in the might of our risen Lord fail us at such a crisis of our history. Rather let the Church of Christ go to her own armoury, and out of the treasure-house of her own past experience, take the stone and the sling which shall slay the giant. There have been giants before this; evils which by the Church's neglect, perhaps, have been allowed to grow to inordinate proportions. It has been by special mission, organised by special united effort, that the Church has been enabled to overcome the evil. There was the giant of Mohammedanism, you will recollect, in the Middle Ages, where the followers of the false prophet had taken possession of the holy city, and a special mission was organised. The Crusaders went forth with their lives in their hands to wipe away what they deemed the foul reproach which had fallen upon their faith. The crusade was the true type and parallel of the conflict with moral evil which yet awaiteth the Church. There has been the giant of heathenism. In later days, the missionary societies were organised to attack it in its stronghold. The giant of heathenism reigned in the ignorance of the people, and the Church of God organised special missions, which for the last twenty-five years have been carried on.

In the words of a distinguished statesman, the province of government is to make it easy for the people to do good, difficult for the people to do evil. The supposed necessity of the drinking-houses is theirs: they at least have a right to say how far that necessity really exists. There is a time drawing on, if we read prophecy aright, when the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled, and Jerusalem, with her children restored to her, shall again be first in her Saviour's

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love: the time when the receiving back of the branch broken off shall be a very life from the dead, when they shall not hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, and the law of the Lord once more going forth from Mount Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge and glory of God, even as the waters cover the sea.

H. J. ELLISON.

The King entering his Capital.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it. S. LUKE xix. 41.

I. PREACHERS have chosen to paraphrase the words and to talk of the 'Redeemer's tears over lost souls.' When Jesus speaks of the Son of Man as coming to seek and save that which was lost, I adhere to His language, I take it to be the best. When it is said, 'He beheld the city, and wept over it,' I understand that the city is meant, and not something else. If it seems to us an unworthy subject of Christ's sorrows that a divine polity which has lasted so many generations, which God, and not man, had set up, which had been the witness to the world that it is God, and not man, who binds the societies of men into one, should be about to pass away with its temple, its sacrifices, all the outward signs of what it was within, I think we can have read sacred history to very little purpose. See whether every page of the Old Testament is not setting forth to us the glory of national life. See whether it was not through their national life that patriarchs and prophets were led to believe in Him who is, and was, and is to come, who would be with the children as He had been with the fathers, who would reveal Himself more to each generation, till at last the earth should be filled with His glory. And now the Jew was deliberately casting aside this marvellous education. He was exalting a Mammon God into the throne of Jehovah. His religion was becoming another name for a selfish calculation of his individual interests. Sects were rending the commonwealth in pieces. Do we want more than this to account for Christ's tears, and for the words, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.' 'Oh that you would have owned Him who would have healed your savage religious strifes, would have bound you into one family, who would have shown you that the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, is as truly your God as He was theirs.' 'But now these things are hid from thine eyes.' A thick impenetrable blindness is coming upon you. You are cut off from the vision of the past. The brightness

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of the ages to come will be lost upon you. For when God's light is changed into darkness, when your desire is to conceal yourselves from Him, what else can look beautiful to you, what is there for you but ever-deepening gloom over heaven and over earth?

II. 'For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'

Surely these are direct words, they cannot be reduced into figures. We cannot talk of casting a trench about 'lost souls,' or laying them even with the ground. The language belongs, if there is any truth in it, to a city and a temple. And therefore we read immediately after: 'And He went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And He taught daily in the Temple. But the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy Him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.'

So Christ carried the war with Mammon into the very place where he was affronting the majesty of the Father. So He testified, that if Mammon was not cast out, God would depart from that place and leave it desolate.

The chief priests and the Pharisees felt that the battle was to be a deadly one. The Galilean was confronting them in their own capital. If He was the King He had found them out; He was calling them to answer for their government over the people. He might destroy them. First they would try if they could not destroy Him. The experiment must be made cautiously. 'The people were very attentive to hear Him.' Their influence was trembling. There might be an insurrection. Who could say where it would end?

We cannot afford to divert this history from its direct purpose. Is not England a nation which Christ has cared for as much as He ever cared for Palestine? Is not London a city which He may weep over as much as He wept over Jerusalem? Have we known the things that belong to our peace? Have we asked Him to put down our factions, to give us His love for our hatred? Are there none that sell and buy in our temples? Must not they be purged?

F. D. MAURICE.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

He Beheld the City.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.

S. LUKE XIX. 41.

I. **W**HY did Christ weep? It has been supposed that the picture of that approaching ruin and desolation which was coming so rapidly upon the unconscious capital, at once appalled and overwhelmed Him. He sketches that picture in strong and rapid strokes Himself. 'The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.' It was a dark and dismal picture. And that which added to it an element of profoundest gloom, was the unconsciousness of those whom such a doom was threatening. Scarce a soul in Jerusalem seems to have been greatly sensible either of the national decadence or of its own individual peril. The pride of the Jew, like the pride of the Spaniard, seemed to be as haughty in defeat as in triumph, and as insolent always as though there were nothing to fear. And yet the sceptre of Israel had departed. The king was a puppet and his throne a jest. By any ear that listened, the tramp of Roman legions threatening the city and the Temple might already be distinctly heard, though it was nearly forty years later before the troops of Titus trampled priests and women under the cruel hoofs of a relentless cavalry. And all that Christ saw, as He stood there and looked down upon beautiful Jerusalem—as distinctly as though it were happening at that very moment!

Must it not have been this that made Him weep? I do not doubt that it was an element in that divine and unmatched sorrow. But that sorrow loses its profoundest significance unless we see that it had another and deeper element still.

His own words tell us what made Him weep. 'If thou hadst known,' He cries, 'even thou in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes!' It was this spectacle of human insensibility, of eyes that would not see, and of ears that would not hear, that broke the Saviour down. It was the consciousness that the Temple and the sanctuary, Mount Zion and the Holy Place, were all alike girt about by a people that did not care. He had spoken to them and they had not hearkened. The Being who had led their fathers out of their bitter bondage into a goodly land, and who had in so many ways revealed Himself in love and mercy to them, had come again in that era of national misfortune

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and humiliation, and they had not been willing to listen to Him. The love of goodness, the longing for righteousness, the aspiration for nobleness and spiritual emancipation—these were dead in them. And it was this that made Christ weep. He could pity their coming sorrow, and He did. But His heart ached, most of all, as He contemplated that inmost evil in them which made those sorrows so necessary and so inevitable.

II. Another question is suggested by these tears of Christ. What did they move Him to do? Remember, that as far as the Jerusalem of that day was concerned, He Himself intimates the case to have been hopeless. The insensibility of the generation to which He spoke was impenetrable, and its doom therefore was certain. And yet, amazing folly, as it must have seemed to more than one of those who watched the career of this strange Being, He threw Himself into the work of rousing and alarming Jerusalem, as though its future might instantly be transformed. From the Mount of Olives He descended straightway to the Temple, and the last week of His life was spent in daily intercourse with its chief priests. How vain, as it then appeared, were all His words! How little availed his sternest tones to stir the slumberous pulses of His time! How unmoved (save by a bitter and personal animosity) were the leaders and teachers to whom He spoke! And when that scornful indifference on their part was exchanged at last for a distinctive enmity, with what needless prodigality, as doubtless it seemed even to some of His own disciples, He flung away His life. Flung it away? Ay, but only how soon and how triumphantly to take it again! The defeat of Golgotha meant the victory of the Resurrection. The failure of the Cross was the triumph of the Crucified; and though by living and preaching He could not conquer the indifference nor awaken the apathy of Israel, by dying and rising again He did. It was the chief priests who, amid the anguish of Calvary, were the most scornful spectators and the most relentless foes. It was 'a great company of the priests,' who, on the day of Pentecost, scarce fifty days after that dark and bitter Friday, 'were obedient unto the faith.' And thus the tide was turned, and though Jerusalem was not rescued from the Vandal hordes of Titus, Jerusalem and Judea alike became the home and the cradle of the infant Church.

C. H. POTTER.

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The Visitation of God.

Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. S. LUKE xix. 44.

THERE is a saying of a well-known divine quoted in the *Christian Year* which is well worth remembering. It is, that Holy Scripture is like a good portrait, which seems to keep its eye on you as you move about the room from the wall on which it is hung. The truth of this saying becomes clearer to us as we get older, and know, on the one hand, more of human life and human nature, and, on the other, more of the true meaning of the Bible. It is a saying which, from the nature of the case, applies, with different degrees of force, to the different parts of the Bible. Many of us, it seems to me, must feel that it applies with especial fitness to the gospel for to-day. This is one of those gospels which will bear preaching on year after year. It is too many-sided, too full of serious meaning, ever to pall upon the spiritual taste. As year by year the passing months bring us to the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, and as we pause before this wonderful gospel and mark the tears of Christ, and listen to His words uttered over the old Jerusalem on the eve of its doom, we cannot but perceive a larger and a larger meaning attaching to it as it is interpreted more and more fully by our increasing experience. And thus it says more to young men than it says to boys, and more to the middle-aged than to the young, and more to the old than to the middle-aged. Its deep and awful import is verified for those who think at all by the events of life and by the lessons of history, although, of course, this verification cannot add anything to its intrinsic worth, but only to our sense of it. Like those schools of scenic beauty, or those masterpieces of art in foreign lands which so many of our countrymen are now hurrying to visit, it may be for a second or a third time in their lives, this passage must be visited again and again if we are to do it any sort of justice. We feel the fascination of the picture before we can account for it to ourselves at all satisfactorily, and as a rule, the music of our Lord's words has long, very long, been treasured in memory before we began to appreciate their bearing on the life of man.

'Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' They are the closing words of Christ's lament over Jerusalem. As He is on His way from Bethany He crossed the Mount of Olives, and began to descend towards the valley of the Kedron, the city came into view. He did not speak at once; it was only when He had come near,—that is, had descended a slight declivity, and then had mounted an intervening ridge, which had for a moment hidden the city from His

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eyes—that He paused, as if to rest, on what travellers have described as a ledge of smooth rock.

Thus He beheld the city, allowing His eye to rest upon it with deliberation, first on one and then on another of its sacred sights, reviewing, no doubt, by the rapid but perfect glance of His mind the whole course of its eventful history. And then, He wept over it, not by an impulse of uncontrollable feeling but because He willed to do it. He wept by an action as deliberate as that by which He beheld the city lying out before Him. And then at last He spoke, and the point of His words, and, therefore, no doubt, the cause of His tears was not so much, mark this, not so much the coming destruction of Jerusalem as the reason for its destruction; not the ruin and collapse of the great Temple, but that which had rendered it inevitable; ‘Thou knewest not,’ He said, ‘the time of thy visitation.’ Read over our Lord’s words and you will see that this is the governing thought in them. Twice He refers to the ignorance of the visitation of things that belonged to Jerusalem’s peace, and this, the cause of the coming doom, introduces and closes the sentences in which the doom is itself described.

First comes the expression of sorrow: ‘If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.’ And then follows prediction of a threefold woe: ‘For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.’ And why? The reason which follows contains the substance of the opening words, ‘Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.’ What was the event which is here described? A visitation is, properly speaking, an ‘over-looking;’ that is the strict meaning of the original word. It is thus used to describe the office of the Apostle in the Acts of the Apostles, and the actions of a bishop in S. Paul’s first Epistle to Timothy, and from this employment of the word in Scripture it has come to be applied to the court, for such it is, which, from time to time, a bishop is bound by the old law of the Church to hold in order to review the state of his diocese. But this word is more commonly applied in the Bible to God’s activity than to man’s, and the visitation of God is sometimes penal, sometimes judicial, and sometimes it is a season of grace and mercy. The day of visitation of which S. Peter speaks, in which the heathen shall glorify God for His good works is, we cannot doubt, the Day of Judgment; and Job uses the Hebrew equivalent to describe the heavy trials which had been sent to test his patience. In the language of Scripture God

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visits man in grace and mercy, as He did the Israelites in Egypt after Joseph's death, as He visited Sarah in one generation, and Hannah in another, as He visited His flock, to use Zechariah's expression, in Babylon. It was such a visitation as this that our Lord had in view. He Himself had made it, and when He spoke it was not yet concluded. This aspect of His Incarnation, of His coming down from heaven as a divine visitation to Israel, has been celebrated in prophecy. 'After many days thou shalt be visited'—so ran the promise in Ezekiel. 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple,' so sang Haggai; and when Christ was born the *Benedictus* arose round His cradle: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people'; 'through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us.' And the popular voice, at one time at any rate, echoed these words of the Temple poet—'A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people.' Yes, Israel had been among visited, and Christ was the Visitor. He passed Israel in review before Him; He visited each class of the population; all the departments and energies of the national life, the actual rulers of the land afar,—Herod, and Pilate, the Roman centurion, and the farmer of the Roman taxes; the great religious teachers and Rabbins, the priesthood, its chiefs and subordinates; the lawyers and scribes who played so great a part in the later life of Israel: the religious sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the political religionists, the Herodians—these one after another He passed before Him. Nor was His inspection confined to the well-to-do or the influential. He spent most of His time and His effort among the common people in their towns and in their villages, in their houses and in their occupations, in their joys and in their sorrows, at a wedding feast in Cana, or by the funeral bier at Nain. He was constantly among them, holding His court, as it were, and giving them opportunities of doing Him homage; it was a visitation for all Israel, but especially it was a visitation for Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the place chosen of God to put His name there; Jerusalem, the city of David; Jerusalem, the seat and the centre of the ancient covenanted worship challenged the inspection of His just and merciful eye as did no other place in Palestine and its streets, its palaces, its schools of law and divinity, above all, its Temple and its services, were successively examined. And presently all would be over; the visitation would be ended by the death of the Visitor in agony and shame; and He Himself, it is plain, already thinks of it as over, and after the manner of the ancient prophets, and of Isaiah especially, He anticipates as present a future which has not yet arrived; He treats the present moment as already of the past. He places Himself in thought in its midst,

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and the city is beleaguered already by the legions of Titus and is hastening to its fall, and He cries, 'Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'

'Thy visitation.' Let us remark two characteristics of this visitation of Jerusalem by its monarch. It was unobtrusive and it was final. The visitation of Jerusalem by Christ was unobtrusive: there was nothing of outward pageant or of royalty to greet the Son of David: there was no royal livery, no currency bearing the king's image and superscription, all these things had passed into the hands of a foreign conqueror, or, in parts of the country, into the hands of princes who had the symbol of independence without its reality. There was not even the amount of circumstance of state which attends the reception of a visitor to some modern institution, a visitor who only represents the majesty of some old prerogative or some earthly throne. As Israel's true King visits Jerusalem, He always reminds us of a descendant of an ancient family returning in secret to the old home of his race: everything is for him instinct with precious memories; every stone is dear to him, while he himself is forgotten. He wanders about unnoticed, unobserved, or with only such notice as courtesy may accord to a presumed stranger. He is living amid thoughts which are altogether unshared by the men whom he meets as he moves silently and sadly among the records of the past, and he passes away from sight as he came, with his real station and character generally unrecognised, if, indeed, he is not dismissed as an upstart with contempt and insult. So it was with Jerusalem and its Divine Master. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. It may, indeed, be asked whether the unobtrusive character of His visit did not excuse the ignorance of Jerusalem. But there is ignorance and ignorance. There is an ignorance which we cannot help, which is part of our circumstances in this life, which is imposed on us by Providence, and such ignorance as this, so far as it extends, does efface responsibility. God will never hold a man accountable for knowledge which God knows to be out of his reach; but there is also ignorance, and a great deal of it, in many lives for which we are ourselves responsible, and which would not have embarrassed us now if we had made the best of our opportunities in past times, and just as a man who, being drunk, commits a street outrage, is held to be responsible for the outrage which he commits without knowing what he is doing, because he is undoubtedly responsible for getting into this condition of brutal insensibility, so God holds us all to be accountable for an ignorance which He knows to be due to our own neglect. Now this was the case with the men of Jerusalem at that day. Had they studied their prophets earnestly and sincerely, had they refused to surrender themselves to political dreams which

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flattered their self-love and which coloured all their thoughts and hopes, they would have seen in Jesus of Nazareth the Divine Visitor whose coming Israel had for long ages been expecting. As it was, His approach was too unobtrusive for a generation which looked forward to a visible triumph.

I. The subject suggests a wide range of applications : let us confine ourselves to a few, and the most obvious. ‘Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.’ Our Lord’s words account for the delay and ruin of nations. Nations have in all ages, as Jerusalem had of yore, their day of visitation. All seemed to be going smoothly ; there is peace on the frontier, there is prosperity at home ; yet there is something rotten that does not meet the eye. So it was with the great empire of Rome under more than one of its later rulers ; so it was with France during the earlier part of the last century, when she was swiftly moving on, as we know now, into the whirlpool of revolution. At these times some act of justice is pressed upon the national conscience by a great writer or a great minister ; some moral or social reform of vital importance to the well-being of the people is advocated by an authority whose claims are beyond dispute ; some measure of precaution against possible danger is recommended ; some fatal prejudice, some variety of popular infatuation, leading directly on the road to ruin, is deprecated in terms which should rouse the conscience of the country. This is the day of visitation. It comes, it lasts only for a time, it is disregarded, and it passes ; and then, after a time, surely comes the penalty, the popular war or the delirium of revolution, or the ostentatious collapse of all that means virtue in national life, until at last the enemy cast his bank around the doomed community, and compasses it round, and lays it even with the ground, and all is over. And on some ruin, perchance, faith guides the hand of history while she traces the words, ‘Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation’

II. And our Lord’s words explain, too, the decay and fall of churches. As a whole, the Church of Christ cannot fall : our Lord Himself has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her : but particular churches may fall all too easily. Where are those seven Churches of Asia now whose names live for ever in the pages of the Apocalypse, and to which such solemn warnings were addressed by our risen Redeemer Himself ? They are, most of them, little better than a heap of ruins ; what once was so fair and beautiful has long been trodden beneath the feet of the infidel. Where are now those Churches of Northern Africa which, during the first four centuries, played so great a part in the history of Christendom ? They had their day of prosperity ; they had their day of visitation, and were laid waste by the Vandal and the Moor. Nay, more, what was the case of

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the Church of Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century? The best and saintliest minds in her knew full well that there was much that needed improvement. There was nothing to be said for such rulers as Alexander vi.; nothing for such enterprises as Tetzels sale of indulgences; nothing for fictions which were known as fictions, but which were still treated, speaking officially, as truths. The revival of learning had disinterred from libraries the fair vision of the Church of the first Christian ages, and men could not but feel that it was in many ways unlike the Church of their own day. Had a serious effort been made and persevered in to restore this purer and nobler past, it is probable that the great disruption of Western Christendom which followed would never have taken place or, if it had taken place, it would soon have ended. The visitation came, but they who then wielded authority never really heeded it; they played with the opportunity of reform as though it had no real justification in Scripture and in history, as though it was merely an eccentric variety of the spirit of rebellion. They hoped that it would die away, spend itself, and be forgotten; they would wait and see. And so it gathered strength; it passed beyond their control, and half of Europe forthwith broke away, or was made to break away, from the old Western Church.

III. An individual life is not less illustrative of the truth before us. We know what a man means when, speaking of his bodily health, he tells us that he has had a 'warning.' He means that some symptom of latent disease has shown itself, some unsuspected weakness in the system, some failure of strength which points to greater care respecting the diet, or exercise, or sleep or work; and if no attention is paid to the 'warning,' we need not be doctors in order to know what sooner or later is likely to follow. And so in the moral and spiritual life God's ways of visiting us are many. There are two in particular which it is well to bear in mind. One is friendship, the influence of a powerful character granted us for a few years or less, and then withdrawn. We never noticed how that friendship came about. Events led to acquaintance, acquaintance deepened into an intimacy, and then change of circumstances or of home or death put an end to it. At the time it was difficult, so we say, to see in that anything remarkable; all was so natural, all was so commonplace; and yet, as we look back on it, we can clearly see that it was remarkable. A real influence has been withdrawn, designed as we can now see to enforce on us some neglected truth, to cure us of some serious fault, to make some vital difference in the direction of our life or in the ingredients of character. It has been withdrawn, and for us that day of visitation has passed, and the solemn question is, With what result?

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Great reason is there for prayer, that at the critical turning-point of our career we may have, in our Lord's words, eyes to see and ears to hear, that we may distinguish God's visitations in life from what is ordinary in it, that we may remember that in every life, even in the most highly favoured, there is sooner or later a visitation which is the last. O Saviour of the world, who by Thy grace and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, O Lord!

H. P. LIDDON.

The Time of Visitation.

Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. S. LUKE xix. 44.

TO the account which S. Matthew gives of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, which has just been read as the gospel for the day, S. Luke adds the passage of which these words are part. Jerusalem, the home of God's elect, which had been considering for ages the promises of prophecy, did not understand what was going on, and what she was called to do when her Lord came with mercy and with judgment to try her heart, and therefore at this moment, when He was come near and beheld the city, He wept over it, and He saw before Him, in spite of the hosannas of the multitude, a city and a people favoured beyond all people, who yet had after all missed the great work, missed the great prize which God had set before them, and for which He had been so long preparing them. The hope of Israel, that for which they had been waiting for hundreds of years; that for which they had endured so much; that which they had all believed in and trusted to in the very depths of their affliction, the hope of Israel, the long-expected Saviour, had actually come, and they would not know Him. 'If thou, even thou, hadst known in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace!' Here was the moment come to blot out all their sin, to repair all their disasters; here was the moment different from all other times in their history, in which God was speaking to them as He had never spoken before to the honest and good heart, if only the honest and good heart were there. There, before their eyes, stooping in outward show to the humblest, but splendid in all the royalty of goodness and mercy, the loving-kindness of the Highest was with them, such as their fathers had never dreamed of. If in former times they had misunderstood God's dealings, here was the day of redemption, which, if they accepted it, would more than make up for all that had gone wrong before. 'If thou, even thou'—the people whom God had enlightened and blessed above all other people—'if at least in this thy day'—when the Son

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of God had come to bring peace and truth in His own person, to speak to thee, to small and great, face to face—if thou, after all former sins and failures, hadst—now, at last, now, in the greatest of thy chances—only known how near thou wert to the things which belong to thy peace; how great the blessing within thy reach; how easy to stretch out thy hand to the unutterable gift—if thou hadst but known!

But Jerusalem would not know her hour of grace. It passed away, and the Lord saw that it was gone, and He wept over the city which He had loved; for between Him and His grace rose the rebellious, obstinate, inflexible will of free agents—free to choose the good as well as the evil. The trial was over, the choice had been made, the things of peace were hidden from her eyes. Now there was nothing left but for the terrible choice to work itself out, first in the High Priest's palace, at the tribunal of Pilate, and on the hill of Golgotha, then in the ruin which was to make the ears of all that heard tingle. 'The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'

Let us to-day, with these thoughts in our minds, take these solemn words home to ourselves in the trial which is ever going on of our own lives. The day of visitation, we may be sure, comes in one shape or another to us all. Not to know the time of our visitation means not to recognise the significance and the bearing of those trials for which we live, which search our hearts and test their soundness. It is not to know when God is giving us some fresh opportunity of good, not to be alive to the openings and the secret leadings which come to us all in due season for a decisive step in the higher choice and the higher life; not to recognise when the time comes, as it comes to all, which is meant especially to suit our necessities, to offer to us a door of escape, to encourage and assist us in doing some good thing for God. There are many different kinds of these visitations of the Most High God, but they are always the possible beginnings of new and better things, of mercies more than had ever been vouchsafed before; but there is about them this danger, that they to whom they come may not know 'the time of their visitation.' And there is, of course, an additional danger when God's visitations are not as they were to the Jews, accompanied by outward signs of His presence and power. The days were, you know, when that presence was revealed by miracle and sign and visible judgment, and He was known to be near us by the earthquake and the wind and the fire. But now it is only the 'still small voice' in the secret of our hearts, which tells us

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that the Lord is near; and if men could be heedless of the manifest signs of His hand and will, they are in danger of not hearing the still small voice. The real dealings of God with us are out of sight; we cannot now lay our hands on this and that, and say: 'Lo, here,' or 'Lo, there'; we cannot make certain of each movement, each call, each instance of God's working, and we are but poor interpreters of His providence and His counsel. The Spirit when He witnesses with our spirit, does so in ways which are secret between our heart and Him, and no one can reveal that secret, and make it plain and certain. If, then, man's blindness and selfishness could withstand the outward calls, the manifest token, how much more the whisper of conscience and the silent guidance of the arm of God! If men were not persuaded that the time of their visitation was upon them when they beheld the Lord heal the sick and raise the dead, we may fear for ourselves lest we miss what is really our opportunity—our day of visitation—when it comes in the usual course of our life, seeming to be nothing more than the common things which happen to us all; seeming to be clothed and veiled in the ordinary changes and chances of our mortal life.

There is, for instance, one sort of visitation from God which many of us are going through now, as real as if we had to make up our minds, or take our side in some difficult question of right or wrong, in some critical decision as to whether we will walk in the ways of evil or of good. How many of us are leading a quiet and peaceful life, an uninterrupted life, without anything apparently to try us; without anything greatly to disturb or trouble us—no great sorrow, no great pain, no great fear, no great disadvantage to struggle with, no great care to weigh us down. There are the common temptations and burdens which belong to the lot of all men; but these surely are little to speak of when we think of what other men have had, have now to go through, what might have come upon us, and has not. And in this kind of life we go on undisturbed, it may be, from year to year, no great change happening in it for worse, or for what the world would call for better. We know what we have to do; we work if we must work; we have our time to ourselves if we are not bound to work; we look out on the course of other men's lives, on the ups and downs, the wonderful success, the tremendous ruin which goes on around us, the wars and commotions of other countries, 'the distress of nations with perplexity;' but we look on at a distance; none of these things come nigh to touch us; peace and quiet are the order of our lives, the regular unbroken order. I can imagine people sometimes being almost frightened at the perfect peace in which their lives go on, with everything given them that they could really need, kept safe from all they fear; all seems to come so easily and so

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naturally that I can almost understand people thinking that something dreadful must be waiting for them some day to make up for the long time that they have been left free from trouble and pain. But this is a fatalist theory. God does not deal with us in that way; He does not make a certain amount of evil weigh against the balance of a certain amount of good. He gives us good and evil by a different mode—one which we cannot understand, but which He administers, knowing what is in each man's heart and is each man's necessity, and which we are sure is not one of caprice and cruelty. He is a loving God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. Let us enjoy those things; quiet days, health, and peace, and safety, and let us go forth in the mercy that has been with us so long.

But there are two things to be remembered. One is that without superstitiously vexing ourselves with the misgiving that God does bring evil upon us in proportion to good, it yet is obviously true that all this quiet cannot go on as it is for ever; that we must expect, some time or other, some of the severer trials of life; that it is not likely that we should always escape pain, or vexation, or sickness, so entirely, at least, as we are doing now. We are still men, and under the covenant of sickness and death. This is one thing, and the other, and even more important is this—this time of quiet, of leisure, it may be of freedom, at any rate, from the burdens of sorrow and pain, unimportant and monotonous as it seems, is a time of visitation. We can, perhaps, hardly imagine ourselves under God's searching and trying eye; we can, perhaps, hardly imagine the awful possibility of our being under God's disapproval, and of His finding us wanting. But surely it is a time when God is visiting us, visiting us as truly as He visited Jerusalem when He sent His Son to tell her of the Kingdom of Heaven; visiting us by mercy and by blessing, as truly as He visits and searches other men by His chastisement and judgment. In this time of peace, and regular work, and quiet days, and nights of sweet sleep, He is trying us, He is training us, and He is giving us time to fit ourselves, insensibly it may be, to meet the harsher ways of His providence; He is seeing what is our true and real mind and heart, whether we have it in us to be thankful and generous; whether so much mercy and goodness will draw our trust and obedience to Him; whether we could be made better, as He would make all men better if it were possible, by giving them the desire of their hearts, and keeping them safe from the evil which they fear.

This is our time of visitation, and how do we do it? Do we ever think as we ought that it is a time of visitation? When some great trouble or sorrow comes upon us, then, if we have any religious feeling at all, we have no difficulty in understanding that God is visiting us; then we feel it to be quite natural to recognise His searching and

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trying hand in what befalls us. Whether we bow to it or resist it, it, at any rate, sobers and solemnises us. We feel—to our cost, perhaps—we think, that the Lord is near, and that the hand of the Lord hath touched us. But do we equally remember that the hand of the Lord is upon us, when He continues keeping us safe from day to day, driving away sickness and death from our door, giving us time and strength and spirit to go on doing our work and our labour until the evening, filling our hearts with joy and gladness, heaping good upon us, and upon our children? Do we remember that surely He is observing how we take all this? We may be all this time growing more and more selfish, more and more unthankful, more and more hard, more and more away from God, more and more in love with the pleasant things of this present time; we may be self-indulgent and indolent, and find it too much trouble to stop and think to some purpose of what we owe, of what we must be to God; too much trouble to see whether we are receiving our good things as Christian and religious men, or as those whose hope and portion are in this life; too much trouble—and, indeed, it is a very real trouble often—to see whether we are saying our prayers in good earnest, and asking God to help us not to abuse His blessing. Surely it is but too easy in the midst of peace and mercy to forget the great seriousness of life, where we are going, whom we have to deal with, what He has given us to do, whom we shall meet when we are dead, how we shall give an account of what we have had and enjoyed. And if we let all this slip out of mind we are missing our day we are hearing the call of God without hearing, we are failing under our appointed trial, the trial of God's loving tenderness, just as if the trial was one of severity and sorrow and suffering, and we were murmuring. The time of our visitation is upon us, and we are not knowing it.

DEAN CHURCH.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The Prophet of Judah.

And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water, thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. 1 KINGS xiii. 20-22.



FEW histories in the Bible teach us more persuasively than this the simple duty of obeying God's will, so far as we know it, under all circumstances. In order to follow the lesson, we have to consider, first of all, what was the mission or work of this prophet of Judah; and then what the nature of the temptations was to which he was exposed; and, lastly, his punishment. And let me add that it is only necessary for you to have the first lesson of this afternoon's service open before you in order to follow what I am going to say.

Now, the subject of this history has no name in Holy Scripture except that of 'the prophet of Judah'—a name which he must have shared with many others at the time. But although his name is not given, his work was of the utmost importance. He is one of that great multitude of human beings who, in all generations, have been among the most influential actors on the scene of human life without being recognised as such. In the eyes of the men of that time Rehoboam and Jeroboam were the two important persons in Palestine. In reality, many of their subjects were much more able to control events for good or for evil; and, in particular, for the moment, the prophet who came out of Judah was more important than either of them.

In order to understand the high nature of the mission of the prophet of Judah, we must remind ourselves of the circumstances under which Jeroboam had become the king of Israel. When Solomon yielded to the suggestions of his idolatrous wives so far as to set up idol shrines close to the holy city, he was warned by the prophet Ahijah that, as a punishment, ten out of the twelve tribes would revolt against the royal house of David during his son's reign. The old jealousy of these tribes towards Judah, suppressed during the

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splendid reigns of David and Solomon, broke out under the feeble and unwise rule of Rehoboam. The revolt was immediately occasioned by Rehoboam sending Adoram, a very incompetent commissioner, to investigate some complaints of over-taxation. The commissioner was stoned to death. The grandson of David himself only escaped a similar fate by a sudden flight. Rehoboam intended at first to subdue the revolted tribes. He was warned by a prophet that what had happened was divinely ordered. The Jews must not shed the blood of their brethren. The ten tribes were therefore constituted as a separate kingdom under Jeroboam, who at once applied himself to the measures which were necessary to secure its independence. And thus we find him fortifying Penuel beyond the Jordan in order to guard his realm against the conquerors of the upper Asia, and rebuilding Shechem, which had been destroyed by Abimelech, to be his residence and his capital.

Now, if Jeroboam's activity had been all of this kind there would have been no occasion for the mission of the prophet of Judah; but Jeroboam had to deal with the religious question—then, as now, much too important a factor in the life of a nation to be ignored by its political chiefs. I say, then as now—*now* as then. Some few years ago the late Mr. Buckle hazarded the opinion that religion was gradually becoming of less and less importance among the causes which affect the life and conduct of the nations of Europe; and since he wrote those lines events have been busily engaged in proving their inaccuracy. We have had Europe convulsed by misunderstandings into which religion has entered most powerfully; and at this very moment, whether we turn our eyes to Italy, or to Spain, or to Germany, or to France, or across the Atlantic to Brazil, or to our own country, everywhere we find ourselves face to face with questions of the first importance, and into which religion enters more conspicuously—I dare to say it—than has been the case since the seventeenth century. It cannot be ignored even in this material age, as it has been termed—it cannot be ignored—that passion and virtue of the human soul (its sublimest virtue, its most enduring passion), which we name 'religion.' Man cannot so far deceive himself if he believes in another order of being—if he believes in another world at all—as to dream that that which affects it is of less importance than that which touches this our earthly perishing life. Religion will always command the suspicion or the sincere respect of the rulers of men, for the simple reason that, whatever be the amount of truth or falsehood of a particular creed in the service of which the religious principle is enlisted, the religious principle itself is at once the purest and the strongest force that can sway the conduct and control the sympathies of their subjects.

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Now, Jeroboam, like many a statesman since his time, looked upon religion not as the happiness and strength of his own life, but simply as an instrument of successful government. He appears to have anticipated, or almost to have anticipated, Hume's cynical theory of an established church as a means whereby a sensible government, taking possession of and satisfying the religious sentiment of the people, would protect itself against outbreaks of religious fanaticism. Jeroboam saw that if, after the separation of the ten tribes, Jerusalem should still continue to be the religious centre of the whole nation, sooner or later it would inevitably become again the political centre too. If the ten tribes were to preserve their political independence of the descendants of Solomon, they must, he thought, have a separate and independent religion; and if such a religion did not already exist, then it must be invented. This was Jeroboam's motive in instituting the worship of the golden calves at Dan and at Beth-el, at the northern and southern extremities of his dominions. It was not idolatry in its grossest form. In the prophets Hosea and Amos the distinction is clearly drawn between the worship of created objects and the worship of the one true God under forbidden symbols; and Jeroboam, no doubt, during his sojourn in Egypt in his early life, had caught the idea of a symbolical worship of Jehovah under this particular form, from the worship of the Egyptian Apis. But such a worship, he must have known, was strictly forbidden to the Jews. He must have known that the worship of the golden calf cast by Aaron himself had brought on the people a sentence of extermination from which they were only saved at the intercession of Moses. He knew, too, that the law had confined the Jewish priesthood to one particular tribe, and yet, when the Levites emigrated into Judah after the separation, he made priests of any who would. In spite of the clear instructions of the law, he changed the divinely appointed date of the Feast of Tabernacles; and, finally, he made himself the spiritual chief of the ten tribes, and in that capacity he proposed to offer a public sacrifice of inauguration in the new sanctuary at Beth-el.

It was a high day, we may be sure, at Beth-el when the scene described in this afternoon's lesson took place. The king, Jeroboam, arrayed in royal state, was standing at the altar to offer incense. The multitude was looking on in silence at an act which meant nothing less than the inauguration of a new religion, when suddenly a prophet from Judah rushed forward into the open space. In burning words he foretold the birth of a prince of the house of David who would slay upon this altar the very priests that burnt the incense. The altar, he said, would be defiled by the sacrifice of human bones; and, just as Isaiah named Cyrus the deliverer of his

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country four centuries before that monarch's birth, so here, more than three centuries before his date, this nameless prophet foretells the name and the work of Josiah as the predestined destroyer of the false religion invented by Jeroboam. As a miraculous sign that his words would prove true the prophet further announced that the altar would be rent, the ashes upon it scattered. Without waiting to see whether the sign was fulfilled, Jeroboam stretched out his hand to lay hold on the prophet, accompanying the act with an order for his arrest. The king's hand stiffened miraculously; at the same moment the altar was shattered and the ashes were poured out. Jeroboam was crushed by the double miracle. He entreated the prophet to pray for his restoration. His prayer was granted, but the new worship at Bethel and at Dan was publicly and fatally discredited. God, it was thus seen, was against its promoters. It was destined, the people knew and felt—it was destined to perish.

Here, then, we see the greatness of the mission with which the prophet of Judah was entrusted. He was to Jeroboam what Samuel was to Saul after the victory over Amalek. He announced God's displeasure at the most critical moment of his life, when an uninterrupted success was crowned by high-handed rebellion against the gracious Being who had done everything for the rebel. Jeroboam had a divine warrant for political separation from Judah: he had no warrant whatever—only because it seemed to him to be politically expedient—to found a new religion. The prophet placed the king under the ban of God. He uttered also the condemnation of his new religion—not, mark you, in the streets of Jerusalem—not in the deserts along the Dead Sea coast where he would have been safe out of harm's way; but at Beth-el, the very sanctuary of the new creed, face to face with its originator and its patron who was surrounded by his court and surrounded by his soldiery, did this messenger of God utter his ban. It was a service of the utmost danger; it was a service of corresponding honour. He went to Beth-el with his life in his hand under the stress of an overmastering conviction, and the sentence which he pronounced withered up the system which was bursting into life. It had its effect—its lasting, its awful effect—on the whole history of Israel down to the captivity.

The prophet of Judah, then, although nameless, was historically and morally a great man. He had, so far as we know, one great duty in life to do—a duty which demanded heroic resolution. He did it manfully. But our public official life may be one thing, our personal, private, spiritual life another. A man is not saved from temptations because he plays a great part in the Church or in the world. Public success is, alas, no guarantee whatever against private, individual, irrevocable failure.

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And here we reach the second point; the temptations to which the Jewish prophet was exposed in the discharge of his mission.

The prophet had been bidden by the very inspiration which sent him on his errand to eat no bread and drink no water in the land of Israel, nor to return to Judah by the way along which he came. Beth-el was not far from the frontier, so that the command might easily have been obeyed. What was the object of the command? Eating and drinking has in all ages, in all stages of civilisation, been considered a token of good fellowship, and the true worshippers of God were no longer able to hold fellowship with the men of Beth-el, who were, in Jewish eyes, idolaters and excommunicate. And the prophet was to return a different way in order to avoid the emissaries of Jeroboam who might bring him back, and tempt him to some compromise unworthy the honour of God and fatal to the complete success of his mission.

I. Now, the first temptation to disobey this command came from Jeroboam himself. Jeroboam had found that, king though he was, he could not crush the man of God by his power. Could he win him over by social attentions? Could he render the awful message, of which the prophet was the bearer, less serious in the eyes of his people, by making a public show of being on good terms after all with the bearer? It was not, we may be sure, to honour the prophet, or to express his own thankfulness for the restoration of his hand, that Jeroboam invited the prophet of Judah to his palace to refresh himself with food and to give him a present. Jeroboam merely illustrates the law of opposition to the work of God in all ages. The world's maxim is, 'Put it down by force if you can, and if that fails then be civil to it; then teach it to feel at home with you; then take it into your pay; corrupt it.' So it has been, again and again, in the history of Christendom. Men, who in humble life have been great agents in promoting moral and spiritual improvements, have got on in the world, been promoted, and have lost their moral power. Why is this? Was it not that the world which quailed before their early, simple, fearless faith, has succeeded at last in enticing them to its palace, and in making them eat the bread and drink the water of good fellowship with itself? They have given it pledges, and they cannot, if they would, be free; they cannot be as they were; they cannot always draw back when they would. The world holds them to the admissions which they have made in its favour, and when they find that resistance is ineffectual, they give up the game, and they drift on with the tide of events, and end, not unfrequently, as the champions and apologists of that which they were sent to rebuke. When a great church historian, speaking of a particular party, says that the apostolic temper was conspicuously wanting in the higher

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places of the Church, the explanation is that the Jeroboams of the time had succeeded, and that the prophets of the Most High, having on their lips a message to rebuke the world in the name of the justice and of the love of God, had ended by making common cause with it. And something of the same kind took place with Christendom, as a whole, after the conversion of Constantine, when heathendom, finding itself no longer strong enough to crush the Church, endeavoured, and, in some respects, not without success, to make it eat bread and drink water in its Beth-el. And yet it was not difficult for a man of the temper of the prophet of Judah to decline Jeroboam's invitation. Such an invitation cannot have said much to his inclination; it cannot for a moment have embarrassed his conscience. Jeroboam's entreaty for the prophet's prayers only expressed his fears, not his repentance. His wish that the prophet should accept his hospitality was plainly at issue with God's command; and a suggestion to disobey, coming from the headquarters of disobedience and rebellion, was easily dismissed. 'If,' said the prophet, 'thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, nor eat bread nor drink water in this place.'

II. A more serious temptation followed, and with a different result. The prophet had taken his homeward road, when an old prophet, who lived at Beth-el, was told by his sons of what had happened to the King of Israel at the inauguration festival. The old prophet determined to endeavour to bring the man back. He rode after the prophet of Judah, found him sitting, no doubt wearied by his exertions and his long fast, under a terebinth tree. The old prophet, having ascertained that this was the prophet of Judah, asked him to return with him. The prophet of Judah at first refused, on the very ground that he had pleaded to Jeroboam: God had forbidden him. The old prophet saw that, in order to conquer this resolution, he must have recourse to fraud. He said unto him, 'I am a prophet also as thou, and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But,' adds the sacred writer, 'he lied to him.'

What was this old prophet? Was he a false prophet or a true: a true prophet seeking his personal edification in an interview with a man who manifestly had such power with God, or a false prophet endeavouring to tempt the prophet of Judah to an act of disobedience which might ruin him? The probable answer to this question would seem to be that the old prophet at Beth-el was a true prophet, in so far that he really had the prophetic gift, but that he was not a good man. Like Balaam before him, he had heavenly endowments, yet personally he was not a man of principle. He was a religious

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adventurer who had a divine commission, and even supernatural gifts, yet who placed them at the service of the world, at the service of Jeroboam. The distinction between official title, or even great personal endowments, or spiritual accomplishments, and personal character, is plain enough. Many bishops and clergymen have ministered in the Church of Christ with full, undisputed, indisputable authority; with, it may be, conspicuous ability, yet without personal, spiritual earnestness and character. It is of course miserable work for the men themselves, and for their people; but God's gifts, whether of authority or of genius, do not necessarily accompany high, moral, and spiritual worth. Judas was not less an apostle because he betrayed his Master. The old prophet was not less a prophet because he had given himself to the service of Jeroboam.

Why should the old prophet have wished to bring the prophet of Judah back? His motive would probably have been a mixed one. He wished to see a remarkable man who has just made a stir in the world; but this was not his only or his deepest motive. He had made a false move himself, and, perhaps half unconsciously to himself, he was uneasy at the idea of a brother prophet who could take a line so much higher, so much truer, so much more heroic, than his own. He would, if he could, bring him down to his own level. At any rate, he would put his high spirit and mettle to the proof. And, perhaps, behind this there was a feeling that, if he succeeded, he would stand very well indeed with the King of Israel, who could have no objection to witness the moral humiliation and the severe punishment of a man who had so signally discomfited his own favourite scheme of governing Israel by manufacturing for it a new religion.

And where the king had failed the old prophet succeeded. His garb, as the prophetic dress is afterwards described so vividly by Zechariah, his garb marked his office. His white hair spoke of the added authority of age. 'A hoary head,' says Solomon, 'is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness.' There is no walk in life, even the most sacred, to which hoar hairs do not add a lustre and weight. To be old is to have been tried; it is to have had experiences; it is to have passed through vast tracks of thought and feeling; it is to have learnt something of the necessity, perhaps something of the majesty, of patience; much of life's actual weakness, pettiness, failures, insignificance, much, it may be hoped, of its possibilities for greatness. To be old is, so far, to have approximated, at however immeasurable an interval, towards the eternal years of God. The fundamental idea of reverence for antiquity, whether in institutions or in men, lies in the sense of its distant likeness to the uncreated, the everlasting Being; and, therefore, wherever man has had the instinct of his true dignity among the creatures, old age has

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been held in honour, and has been readily credited with a high and commanding authority. But of all the sad spectacles in the moral world one of the saddest is when age descends to abuse its high and sacred prerogatives; when the love and trust and veneration which it invites are only accepted and used to mislead or to chill those who give it. And this spectacle, alas, is seen not unfrequently. The old prophet of Beth-el is not dead. Shivering on the brink of his grave from generation to generation, he cannot bear to see a younger race undertaking duties from which he shrank. Who has not heard of young men with noble, although, it may be, uninstructed, conceptions of duty and of honour, going to ask an aged friend or relative if it is not possible to realise them, and meeting with a shrug of the shoulders and a cynical smile, 'Young man, when you have lived as long as I have, and have come to know something about the world as it is, you will find out that these high-flown ideas are but the dreams of youth, and that the true secret of life is to do what you can for yourself in any way that you can do, and to leave other people and concerns to take care of themselves.' Who has not heard of young clergymen, impressed deeply with the seriousness and reality of their office, with the boundlessness of our Divine Redeemer's love, with the reality of His work—His present enduring work—upon souls by His Spirit and through His Church; young men anxious above everything to do their duty not grudgingly but with all their hearts, going to some old incumbent whose life and work have been a gigantic failure to do spiritual good to any human being, and then being told that all this activity was unnecessary and mischievous, and that the old way of doing as little as you could, was the really religious course for a clergyman, and that increased services, and increased communions, and increased care for souls, and increased reverence for all that touches God's service, are unnecessary or unspiritual, or, as the phrase runs, 'signs of a party,' and that the true object is to get on quietly, with as little disturbance of accustomed routine as possible. Others eat bread and drink water at Beth-el. Why should you be singular? And in some cases, alas, the tempter's word has been listened to, and men who might have been eminent and devoted servants of Christ have been chilled to the very heart by the words of those whose experience and enthusiasm they have trusted at the outset of their career.

No, certainly, we have not to look very far, or to listen very long, in order to discover that the old prophet of Beth-el is anything but dead. Ay, and if he cannot carry his point in any other way he will still plead overpowering religious motives. An angel, he will say boldly, has spoken to him, too, by the word of the Lord, while his conscience whispers to him that it is a lie. He will invoke the

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sanction of heaven against heaven's best and purest inspirations. He will talk about a religion which, if it is notoriously unproductive and slothful, is spiritual, forsooth, in proportion to its barrenness and its sloth; a religion which combines the highest satisfactions of conscience with the entire indulgence of personal inclination or ambition. 'I am a prophet also, as thou art, and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'

Many a man who could withstand Jeroboam to the death quails before the confident imposture of the old prophet, before this solemn appeal to God against the obligation of God's own guidance and commands, before this invocation of the eternal justice to patronise the laxity and self-seeking which he has already condemned. So it was with the prophet of Judah. He would have died rather than have closed with Jeroboam's offer. Looking at the sacred garb, at the white hairs, of the old prophet of Beth-el, he listened to that false appeal to his own Lord and Master, and he fell.

Do I say that young men are never guilty of extravagant enthusiasms, and that old men are not bound in charity to set them right? Far from it, but it is one thing to pour cold water on a noble and a burning impulse, and another to give it a right direction. The misery is when older people, forgetful of the lofty mission of age, exert their authority to stint, to cramp, to stiffen, all the higher aspirations of young life; to teach young men and women that religious enthusiasm is always folly; that high views of duty are a morbid state of conscience which will be outlived. It may succeed. Old age at the moment may succeed. Its success, be certain, will cost it an everlasting heart-ache.

III. The thing was done. The prophet of Judah returned, and they were seated at the table of the old prophet of Beth-el over their feast of disobedience, and then, by a solemn, by a terrible irony, the seducer was forced to pass a solemn sentence upon his victim. Prophet as he was, he could not resist the Spirit who forced him to speak. 'It came to pass as they sat at the table that the word of the Lord came to the prophet which brought him back, and he cried to the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water, in the place of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water, thy carcase shall not come to the sepulchre of thy fathers.'

What a commentary on those energetic words of the Psalmist, 'He doth ravish the poor when he getteth him into his net. Yes,

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the world does not really, in the long-run, respect the men who obey it. It has a bad conscience at bottom. It knows that it has no right to dictate on questions of Christian duty or Christian truth. In its heart of hearts it despises, it even pities, those who believe it. When all is over it tells them that they were mistaken after all. It dwells with poetic sentiment over the circumstances of their ruin; the carcase cast in the way, the ass standing by it, the lion also standing by the carcase, to illustrate the severity and the reserve of the Divine justice. These things touch its sentiment and its imagination. It drops a tear over the grave of its victim. It would fain be buried near its bones. The poetry and feeling are not duty and action. It is too late, when we have ruined a soul, to unsay the sophism which seduced it, to shed tears over a career which, under other guidance, might have escaped the lion in the way of life.

It may be thought that, considering the old prophet's appeal to an angelic vision, the responsibility of the prophet of Judah was not so great after all; that he was rather sinned against than sinning, that his punishment was out of proportion to his offence, which was that of a too ready credulity rather than of deliberate disobedience. I do not deny that the responsibility for the prophet's act was distributed, that the guilt of the old prophet of Beth-el was as serious as guilt well could be. And if the sterner penalty here was paid by the prophet who disobeyed, and not by the prophet who tempted to disobedience, this is what we see every day of our lives. The victims of false teaching too often suffer, while, so far as this world is concerned, the false teacher escapes, and conscience, witnessing this—witnessing other like mysteries of the divine government, utters its ceaseless, its irrepressible appeal to a hereafter when the strange inequalities of God's awards here shall be perfectly redressed. But the prophet of Judah was guilty. He was guilty as they only can be guilty who have had great graces, clear and strong views of truth and duty, high commissions intrusted to them, and have yielded to some temptation to abuse or degrade their trust. He knew what God had said to him; he knew that God had said it; he knew that God could not contradict Himself. Unless there had been some subtle warp, some secret sympathy in him with what was wrong, he would have rejected the old prophet as he rejected Jeroboam. Age and office have their weight, their grave, their indisputable, weight; but they can never make the true to be false, or the right to be wrong, for any clear, healthy conscience. When age or office abuses its prerogatives, conscience meets them with the words of the Apostle, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

The lesson which we learn from this history is, as I said at the beginning, one of the most important that a man can master. It is

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that, however high, however lowly, may be our place in society, or in the Church of Christ, our first duty is fidelity to God's voice in conscience. No eminence of position or accomplishments will atone for the absence of this loyalty. No insignificance in the world's eye can dim its spiritual lustre. The point upon which all turns may seem to outward eyes trivial enough. The apple in Paradise, viewed as an apple, seemed a trivial thing upon which to hang the destiny of a world; but behind some given duty which conscience acknowledges as duty, be it a serious observance of the Lord's day, or regular study of Holy Scripture, or regular reception of the Holy Communion, or the conscientious use of money, or thorough honesty in word or act, or kindly services to relations or to the poor, or some small or needful point of self-denial: behind the single point, whatever it may be, there may lurk nothing less than the whole question of the soul's loyalty to known truth. What can be more petty than the circumstance of eating bread and drinking water at Beth-el, to all appearance? And yet, in reality, everything depended upon it, because it was not the outward transaction, it was the inward principle which that transaction represented, that was really at stake. In reality, the mere circumstance of eating or not eating in a given place constituted nothing less than the frontier between two moral and spiritual states or worlds, between the kingdom of faithfulness to light and grace, and the kingdom of declared disobedience. May God enable us to see things, not simply on the surface, and in the light of human judges, but as they are, to measure them not by a material or social, but by a spiritual and moral standard, to understand that great issues may depend on even insignificant circumstances, and to determine that, if He can achieve it by His grace, we will be true to what He has taught us of truth and duty, cost it us what it may!

H. P. LIDDON.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Rejection of Christ.

But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and killed the Prince of Life. . . . And now, brethren, I wol that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Acts iii. 14, 15, 17.



THE Book of Wisdom was written by some unknown Greek-speaking Jew at a period some time before the writing of the first of the books of our New Testament; and, according to a literary habit of the Jews, put into the mouth of Solomon. It contains, among other things, a description of how the unrighteous world might be supposed to deal with the perfectly righteous man. Insulted by a moral superiority which they cannot gainsay, furious at reproofs which they know to be just, outraged by the claim to know and to be the Son of God, they are described as crying, 'Let us see if His words be true; let us prove what shall befall Him in the latter end; for if the just man be the Son of God, He will help him and deliver Him from the hand of His enemies. Let us examine Him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know His weakness and prove His patience; let us condemn Him to a shameful death.' As we read, in one mood, this powerful description we are inclined to say, 'Surely, after all, it is exaggerated; surely it takes too gloomy a view of the conduct of even the ordinary ungodly world.' But we read it in another mood, and we see that it was in fact verified. It reads to us like little else than an historical account of the way in which men treated the Righteous One, Jesus of Nazareth! We are so accustomed to think of the death of our Lord as it is, our redemption, and as it reveals to us the love of God—we surely cannot think of it too much in that connection; but it ought not to let us forget that there is a prior revelation contained in the Cross. If it reveals the love of God, it reveals first of all the sinfulness of man; it takes off the veil, it discloses with a horrible reality what all over the world human sin is doing. When He, the Righteous One, came into this world of ours with His offer of perfect love, with His claim of perfect justice, this, in historical fact, is how the world treated Him: they examined Him with despitefulness and torture, they put Him to a shameful death.

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I. The Moral Guilt of the Jews. Let us occupy ourselves with that consideration. Of course, there would be some who would not say, Is it legitimate to attribute this to human nature as a whole? Was it not, in fact, the extraordinary sin of certain Jews at a particular period to which we must attribute this unspeakable crime? And the answer is an unhesitating 'No,' if you will consider a little attentively the real moral condition of the situation. There are a great many incidents in our Lord's Passion which strike us with appalled horror, because we know so fully who He was. But after all, that cruel mocking, the purple robe and the crown of thorns, what was this but the rough mockery of Roman soldiers who knew nothing about this particular prisoner who was handed over to them for execution, and who were, alas! in the habit of treating with this rough brutality the prisoners who were delivered over to them? We no doubt translate it into a sort of image of what sin is always doing for the love of God, and we do rightly, but in the historical situation our Lord estimated more rightly their guilt when He cried, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!' Look a little further, and you will see that the fact that our Lord was crucified, that is to say, that He died by that particular death, was due to the fact that Judæa had at this time become a province of the Roman Empire, and that this was the death to which in the Roman Empire provincials were condemned.

Look a little further back still, and ask how it was that our Lord came to be condemned to death, and handed over for execution to the Romans. It was because the Jews had no longer the power of life and death, but they had the power of condemnation, and our Lord had made a claim which they saw, if it was not true, was, in fact, blasphemous, and they spoke the truth when they said, 'We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Surely, if not a true claim, it was a blasphemous claim, and blasphemy, like all other serious crimes under the old law, was punishable by death. Yes. Run it back to its actual moral condition, and you find yourself face to face with this fact: the moral guilt of the Jews lay in this, and in this only, that they would not receive the moral and spiritual claim which Jesus of Nazareth made upon them, they would not have Him on His own terms. And when you come to think of the different classes of the Jews, and of the moral claim which in fact our Lord made upon them, you will come to feel that the situation was one under which the acceptance of the claim did indeed demand qualities which at least are not common in human life. We shall do well to think about this.

Think first of the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the sacerdotal

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class in power among the Jewish people. Now the Sadducees had the politician's customary view of Jerusalem, that is to say, they resented its intrusion into the region of practical politics, and they were sceptical with the worldly man's scepticism, the scepticism which is anxious to keep religion, the supernatural claim, at arm's-length. Well, then, it was upon a people of this sort, intrusted with a political situation—difficult, no doubt, to manage—that our Lord made His supernatural claim felt with such tremendous force. 'Ye do err,' He said to them, 'ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the power of God upon the clouds of heaven.' They trembled under that sort of claim; they felt that it would break up the smooth position in which, at least, the political situation was tolerable; they got together, they consulted, 'If this Man be let alone all men will follow Him'; it will become a serious political matter, 'and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.' It was under these circumstances that Caiaphas uttered his memorable suggestion, 'It is better that one man die for the nation, and not that the whole nation perish.'

Or, consider the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the religious class of the nation; they went by the law, the whole law, and nothing but the law; they prided themselves as having escaped so many of those tendencies to lapse into idolatry which had been customary among their forefathers. They had escaped a great number of the denunciations to which the people of the Jews were subjected at the hands of the prophets; they were proud of themselves; they were thorough Jews, they were Israelites indeed, they said, and not only were they proud of themselves, as the religious class of the nation, but the nation as a whole was proud of them too. They were looked up to, they were, in fact, the pious, in the days of the Messiah, they undoubtedly would have the chief place. Now it is a hard thing for a religious class, high in its own esteem and in the esteem of people round about it, to be spoken to, to suffer itself to be spoken to, as Jesus of Nazareth spoke to the Pharisees, for behind all their accuracy of observation He perceived a moral hollowness, and His words fell stern and sharp, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.' Or the common people. They were ready enough to welcome this Benefactor, ready enough to welcome Him, full of good deeds, full of loving-kindness to all who were weak, or disowned, or suffering. 'The common people heard Him gladly.' They came to be healed, they came to be taught; again and again they would have come by force and made Him a king; they surrounded Him on His entrance into Jerusalem; they were there crying with enthusiasm, 'Hosanna

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to the Son of David ! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest.' But all this enthusiasm contained very little of moral seriousness, and what Jesus of Nazareth claimed was a large measure of moral seriousness. He would not come down to the level of their aspirations, to want the things that they wanted and to lead them in the matters in which they wanted leading, and therefore their enthusiasm turned into indifference, therefore the 'Hosanna !' passed into the 'Crucify Him ! crucify Him.' So it was Pharisees, Sadducees, and common people gave Him up.

II. The offence of Pilate.

But there was another nation implicated in this rejection of Christ—the nation of Rome, and the Roman people are represented to us by a single individual, and this single individual, Pontius Pilate, affords us an opportunity for pressing this matter home upon our individual consciences, for taking it out of the general into the particular. The situation of Pontius Pilate, the Roman, was of course quite different from the situation of the Jews. He had none of that responsibility which came of the special religious revelation given to the Jews. He knew nothing about the Christ. His situation at Jerusalem at the moment was exactly the situation of a collector or commissioner in the Indian Civil Service who goes up to one of the great centres of native population in India at the time of a religious festival, because then the people congregate there, and there is great likelihood of tumult and religious disorder ; therefore Pontius Pilate was in Jerusalem at the time of the feast. And his situation was in every way remarkable. It was the Roman policy, you know, mixed with scornfulness, no doubt, but consistent, to respect the religious prejudices of the Jews, and Pontius Pilate had, as we know from secular history, three times offended against this religious policy of the Roman Empire—once when he had brought the Imperial standards into Jerusalem with the effigy of the Emperor upon them, and there had been a great outbreak ; once when he had brought some golden shields marked in the same way with the name of some heathen deity ; once when he had taken money out of the sacred treasury, and used it for the construction of an aqueduct. These offences had been reported at Rome, and Pilate had been already reprimanded. It was, in fact, but a few years later that he was summoned to give account of his offences at Rome, when again he had offended against the religious susceptibilities of the Samaritans. This was his position ; there was a Roman policy, and he himself was gravely under suspicion for violating it. And there was not among Roman magistrates any tradition of really personal justice. There were very few Roman magistrates, if any, who would have scrupled to sacrifice an individual to a political exigency. And of course there

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was no halo, such as artists decorate the head of our Lord with, round His head as He stood there, the Galilean Peasant, before Pontius Pilate the Governor. He was called down, that early morning, to the trial of the Galilean prisoner, without any of the solemn preparation which we should like to give when we are summoned to the great crises of our lives, but, as in fact happened, he was called down in the ordinary way of business, just as we are told that some one wants to see us for this or that ordinary transaction. So, unprepared, he went down and found himself confronted with a moral crisis, for he became sure that this Galilean Peasant was innocent, that there was no peril from Him to the Roman Empire; nay, that He was more than innocent; there was something majestic, pathetic, solemn, in that attitude, that Personality, which he could not understand, but which smote upon him; he was sure that it was for envy they had delivered Him, and for no real crime. But, on the other hand, they were set upon having His blood. There was every political exigency on the other side, and you watch with a pathetic interest as Pontius Pilate struggles to evade the moral issue, and finds he cannot, and falters and fails, and again his conscience gives him up, and the great tragedy is enacted.

III. The common worldly world.

It is the common worldly world then which rejects Christ, represented by Jews or represented by Pilate. It is the common worldly world, the world all over. And the strenuous duty which lies on us is to examine ourselves, to look into our own conduct, to see ourselves in the light of God. Things come to look so customary that we forget their real significance. The things looked customary to Jews and Romans; they had not the air which after the reflection of ages we see the facts now to-day invested with; they looked customary and ordinary enough to them. We need to tear off the veil, we need to ask ourselves, What is my relation, even mine, to that call, that difficult call of righteousness, of truth, of meekness, which is Jesus Christ daily on His trial in this world of ours? Are we sure that not the claims of religious convention or political exigency, or the effort to rise to higher moral claim, or the mere pressure of personal interest, are we sure that none of these things are blinding our eyes, and making us deaf and blind to the pure claim of the righteousness of God? If we cannot be sure of this, believe me we are on the side of Pilate, we are on the side of the Jews, we are against Christ, 'He that is not with Me is against Me.'

And on the other hand, look only for a moment at the glory which invests all those, and they are not a few in the history of our nation, who stand conspicuous as men who under no circumstances can we ever conceive capable of playing false to the claim of God. Think of a ruler like John Lawrence in our Indian Empire; you know that

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injustice or corruption could never have got to him under whatever pressure of political exigency. Or think of the business men who have sacrificed themselves—they are not a few, we probably have all known them, even in our own generation and surroundings—who have sacrificed prospects, and chosen to be poorer men because they would not do the dishonest thing. Or think of the churchmen who have stood alone, who have looked behind convention, who have sworn they would be true to truth though they went against popular currents. Or think of the young men who have stood again and again at school or college any amount of solitude or of ridicule rather than tolerate the word or deed of impurity! The point we have got to realise is that it is possible to be on the side of Christ, but not possible without distinct and personal effort.

There are those here who but lately made their vows in confirmation, and were sealed by the unction of the Holy Ghost, that gift of the Holy Ghost which anoints them to the share which every man should bear in the Kingship and Priesthood of Jesus of Nazareth. You are anointed with that holy unction, that you may stand strong, confirmed in the cause of Christ; and what you, what we all must realise is, that you cannot be a Christian as a matter of course, you cannot be a Christian without being ready to stand alone, without being ready to make sacrifices, without being ready to go against custom, without being ready to seek the friendship of Jesus in His sufferings as well as in His consolation.

CANON GORE.

The Pilgrim's Prayer.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. PSALM xxxix. 12, 13.

THERE are three points in the text calling for notice. There is—

I. The spirit of the prayer.

‘Hear my prayer, O God, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears.’

In this prayer we observe a mixture of

1. Faith.

The Psalmist believed that God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. And therefore he says, ‘Hear my prayer, O Lord.’ He felt that he was not praying to a deaf idol, which has ears but hears not. He felt, too, that he was not praying into the air; but to an unseen yet present God. Alas! too many have no faith in

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prayer. They join in the prayers at church, or they join in the prayers at their family altar, or they go through the ceremony of saying their prayers in private; but there is no exercise of faith in their devotions. They do not really desire that for which they pray. There is no true feeling like that of the Psalmist, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord.' It is a mere cold and formal service.

2. Earnestness.

David not only had faith in his petitions. He not only said, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord.' He mixed earnestness also with his devotions; and therefore he added, 'and give ear unto my cry.' He thus resembled David's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the days of His flesh, we are told, came before God, not only with prayer, but likewise with 'strong crying.'

We often complain that God does not hear our supplications. But whose is the fault? The fault is not God's. The fault is our own. 'Ye have not,' replies God, 'because ye ask not; or if you do ask, ye ask amiss. Ye ask without faith. Ye ask without earnestness. And therefore God heareth you not.'

3. Contrition.

He not only said, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord; and give ear to my cry'; he also added, 'Hold not Thy peace at my tears.' David knew that he was a sinner, a miserable, gross sinner, and therefore he cried, 'Deliver me from my transgressions. Wash away my offences. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.' He implored pardon, even with weeping, as he remembered his guilt, and said, 'Hold not Thy peace at my tears.'

Oh that our prayers may be equally acceptable in God's sight. Oh that He may see faith, earnestness, and contrition, even with tears, marking our supplications! and then, through the Saviour's intercession, we shall boldly make David's form of prayer our own form of prayer, and say, with faith, with earnestness, and with contrition, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord; and give ear unto my cry. Hold not Thy peace at my tears.'

We now consider not only the spirit of the prayer, but also

II. Its occasion.

Some writers think the Psalm was written during Absalom's rebellion, when David was compelled to flee from Jerusalem and to go over Jordan as an outcast and a wanderer. He thereupon cried unto God for deliverance, and said, 'I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' But, whatever was the occasion of the Psalm, the mind of David seems to have been greatly discomposed when he wrote it; and he had a deep impression of the vanity and uncertainty and shortness of human life.

Now this feeling ought to be our feeling also; and that, too, not

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on particular occasions, but at all times. We are in this world only as foreigners in a strange land. We are here as sojourners, like travellers who turn aside to tarry for a night. The same was the case with our fathers before us. They appeared on earth for a little while, possibly for their threescore and ten, or even fourscore years, and they then went from us, and are now no longer seen amongst us. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were David's fathers according to the flesh; and they, we know, wandered from city to city, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers.

We should feel that life is short, and that therefore we ought to wait more and more in prayer upon our God. And why need we go to God in prayer? This will be seen from the last verse of our text. You have noticed the spirit of the prayer, and the occasion on which it was offered. Now observe

III. Its object.

The object of the prayer was that David might be in a prepared state before his soul departed into the eternal world. 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.' If David imagined that the rebellion of Absalom might prove successful, and end in some way in his own death, he might well ponder the solemnity of that event. To die, even to the Christian, is a momentous thing; and most Christians, if suddenly asked whether they are willing to depart, would inwardly cry, with the Psalmist, 'O spare me a little!' When the message of death was brought to King Hezekiah, he was directed, in the prospect of it, to get his family affairs, as well as his spiritual concerns, ready for that change. 'Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.' And has not this been continually your secret desire whenever the idea of your removal came into your minds. You have a good hope through God's grace; you trust your sins are all pardoned through the blood of the Saviour; you glory in Christ as the Lord your righteousness; and yet, like Hezekiah, you feel you would like time to set your house in order before you go. In your hearts there is a secret misgiving, not as to your own personal salvation, but as to the fit time of your removal; and you wish, as soon as the idea of death crosses your minds, that you may not die yet. There is something in your family that specially demands your continuance in the flesh. Or you feel that of late you have not been so watchful and prayerful as heretofore; and therefore you plead, Spare me this year; spare me for such a period; O spare me a little longer, till my plans are more matured, or till my graces are more quickened!

Let us learn to meditate, and so learn to pray. Meditate on your sins, and you will then pray, as David did, 'Deliver me from all my transgressions.' Meditate on the purifying influences of Christ's

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atonement, and you will then pray, 'Purge me with hyssop,' the hyssop of the Redeemer's blood, 'and I shall be clean; wash me in that purifying fountain, and I shall be whiter than snow.' Meditate on the converting power of the Holy Ghost, and your prayer will then be, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.' Meditate on the shortness of time, and you will then pray, as David prayed, 'Hold not Thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner.'

C. CLAYTON.

The Invitation Refused.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! S. MATTHEW xxiii. 37.

HAVE the hours of life been more in number than the calls in life? I think not. But where are they? Those heavenly whisperings—those angel voices—where are they? Where are the traces! Oh, what might be the nearness to God this day—what might be the peace this day—what might be the holiness this day—what might be the heaven this day with all—if one, if a thousandth part of those calls had been heard, as they might have been; accepted, obeyed, as they might have been! For, mark, it is not for not obeying only, it is for not hearing that we shall have to give account. Multitudes, multitudes are the invitations not heard, and which yet might have been, if the heart had been still enough, and if the affections had been free enough! Oh, you live too much in a world of your own imagination; you live too much in the world's busy din: you live too much in the feverish hum of dissipation and excitement: and so, the beautiful music sounds—but it is lost.

But to show still more the guilt of the rejection, let me just place before you the true background of this picture. Who was it all the while that stood behind and called?

The Father, in tenderest love: 'My son, my son, give Me thy heart.'

A Saviour—a bleeding Saviour—every wound bleeding: 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?'

A glorious Conqueror, descending from His throne of thrones, and suing at your heart, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

And yet, it is an unquestionable fact—that by some of you—Oh, I trust not all of you; I trust not many of you: God only knows; still, it is an unquestionable fact—that by some of you, all these approaches of God have been, up to this very hour, rejected!

But, since you have not all rejected Him alike, I wish now to point

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out to you some of the different modes in which the rejection of God has been made.

Some there are who will even rise up and say, 'I do not consider that I have ever yet been called.' And these divide themselves into two classes.

Those who wish that they could believe that they had been called, but cannot bring their mind to think that anything so good has happened to them, as that God should so remember and desire them, as that He should call them.

And there are those who virtually complain, 'I do not hold that I have received my call. It is not what God might have done: it is not what God ought to have done if He wished to call me. I wait and expect a further call. Why does not God, if He would indeed save me, make some great interposition on my behalf?'

Alas for the guilty unbelief of the one, and the awful, blasphemous presumption of the other!

But, still more than these: there are those who, conscious that they have been called, nevertheless treat the matter with indifference.

These are your 'men at ease in Zion'; men familiarised with stifled convictions; men of secular habit of mind; men to whom invisible things carry no reality in daily life.

There is your man of business: a man of increasing substance, great in his position, his property, his gold: 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.'

And, then, there is your man engrossed in his round of money-making toil: his worldly duties so pressing as to leave him no space for spiritual concern: 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.: I pray thee have me excused.'

And, then, there is the humble, domestic man, living in his own little circle: his thoughts seldom going beyond his home. Affectionate, but irreligious; his affections strong, but earthward: 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

There are more, again, who recognise the importance of a call, but who put off the acceptance of it. These are minds which Satan decoys by beautiful pictures of their own future. They live in fancies of their own coming holiness. 'At present, indeed, I know it is wrong: but to-morrow's goodness shall well make up for to-day's worldliness.'

But, oh! mark the sin of these. These men think that they can command the sovereign working of the Holy Ghost. They put Him away now, that they may recall Him when they please!

More foolish, more guilty—than if they thought they could chain the free winds of heaven—they dictate to the Holy Ghost His time

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and manner of work. 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'

And yet, again, in this long company who reject their own mercies, there are others—a large class—quick, impressive, sensitive characters, who, at the time, receive, and welcome, and reciprocate, the love of God—but it all dies away like 'water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.' Their religion is a feeling: it never formed itself into a principle. And yet they take credit to themselves for their beautiful impressions. And they are just on the eve, every day, of being happy; but it is always 'I go, sir; I go': yet they go not.

There is a fifth class—the saddest, the guiltiest, the most awful of all. They listen—they draw nigh—they 'taste the heavenly gift'—but the old, carnal nature comes back again, and it prevails. They draw back, and they go out into the distance, and have 'crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame': and they 'judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.'

Now, of all these refusals of God's grace, the real secret is the same. They may cover themselves with various prettexts—just as persons having made up their minds to decline an invitation begin to look out for some convenient excuse—but the cause is one. It is not in any outward circumstances; it is not in any particular temperament; it is not in the want of power; it is not in the straitenings of divine grace: but our Saviour points to it at once with His omniscient mind: 'How often would I have gathered thee—and ye would not.' It is the absence of the will; it is the want of that setting of the mind to God's mind; that conformity of the affections to God's promises: that appreciation of unseen things; that spiritual sense, which is the essence, and the beginning, of a new life. Therefore they cannot come.

And see, oh, see the affecting results! It is a weeping sight.

Here is the music of a voice of love—sweeter than all love—playing around the avenues of men's hearts, and they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear.

Here are costly gifts—more precious than ten thousand worlds—pressed upon man's acceptance—an eternity with God. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' And men pass by it as a thing of nought, and they go every man to his border.

Here is the most loving and the most lovely being, baring His heart to receive poor sinners back again to His bosom, and they see 'no beauty in Him to desire Him.'

Here is the voice by the crowded wayside of this crowded life

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crying ever, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

But, all the while, men—poor, sinking men—will carry on their burden still, and will hug their sins still, till they faint, and lie down, and die.

Oh, what a spectacle before high heaven! What a marvel to the eyes of holy angels, to hear Him calling to such worms of earth, and they refuse.

And what will be the end of it? What will be the end of it?

Ask Jerusalem—ask Jerusalem. The end will be—the most accurate retribution that the world ever saw.

Now, He is the Caller, and we the called: then, we shall be the callers, and He the Called.

But, as now, so then, both refuse!

'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.'

I see a closed door, and at that door a crowd; and they are crying out, each man with an exceeding loud and bitter cry, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But His voice, within that closed door, makes only the answer, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you.'

I see a vast assembly. 'The kings of the earth are there, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman;' and there is a wail among that crowd; they call upon the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' But the rocks and the mountains hear them not!

Oh, thanks be to His grace, it is still God's sweet gathering time. 'As the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,' so is the Son of Man gone forth to gather you. By many a loud note of promise, by many a preached word, by many a gracious overture, by many a 'still small voice,' He is gathering in you.

Hark, hark, the shades of evening are falling fast, the bird of prey is in the air, and there is no refuge, there is no peace, there is no safety for God's little ones, but underneath those shadowing wings!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

ILLUSTRATIONS

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Two Characters. 1. TAKE an ordinary man of the world. What he thinks and what he does, his whole standard of duty, is taken from the society in which he lives. It is a borrowed standard: he is as good as other people are; he does, in the way of duty, what is generally considered proper and becoming among those with whom his lot is thrown. He reflects established opinion on such points. He follows its lead. His aims and objects in life, again, are taken from the world around him, and from its dictation. What it considers honourable, worth having, advantageous, and good, he thinks so too, and pursues it. His motives all come from a visible quarter. It would be absurd to say that there is any mystery in such a character as this, because it is formed from a known external influence—the influence of social opinion and the voice of the world. ‘Whence such a character cometh,’ we see; we venture to say that the source and origin of it is open and palpable, and we know it just as we know the physical causes of many common facts.

2. There is a certain character and disposition of mind of which it is true to say that ‘thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.’ . . . There are those who stand out from amidst the crowd, which reflects merely the atmosphere of feeling and standard of society around it, with an impress upon them which bespeaks a heavenly birth. . . . Now, when we see one of those characters, it is a question which we ask ourselves, How has the person become possessed of it? Has he caught it from society around him? That cannot be, because it is wholly different from that of the world around him. Has he caught it from the inoculation of crowds and masses, as the mere religious zealot catches his character? That cannot be either, for the type is altogether different from that which masses of men, under enthusiastic impulses, exhibit. There is nothing gregarious in this character; it is the individual’s own; it is not borrowed, it is not a reflection of any fashion or tone of the world outside; it rises up from some fount within, and it is a creation of which the text says, We know not whence it cometh.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, 1 CORINTHIANS XV. 1-11.
GOSPEL, S. LUKE XVIII. 9-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . 1 KINGS XVIII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . 1 KINGS XIX. OR 1 KINGS XXL
SECOND LESSONS, ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Still Small Voice.

And after the earthquake, a fire: but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 1 KINGS xix. 12.



HERE is a thing deeply to be deprecated, that God should visit a man so—should actually speak to the man—and that that man should not be aware that he was in communication with God.

I wish to try to provide against such a calamity. I wish so to consider what God's voice is, that, if it be possible, He may never speak to any one of us without our knowing it.

The very expression that His voice is still and small, will lead us to see, that there is a great danger that we may miss it.

Conceive yourself, on some dark wintry night, upon a stormy sea; your barque among rocks; and that one single voice from the shore can alone tell you how to escape; and that that voice is still and small; and that it sounds but at intervals.

How you would listen to that voice! How, amidst the roar of

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the elements, you would draw in your breath, to catch the welcome sound ! With what an expectation would your mind listen for the note, as it fell again and again on the breeze !

And is there no peril in this world, lest we lose, amidst our swelling passions, the gentle voice which speaks to us from heaven—till our soul draws on unto destruction ?

The fact is, most of us make a mistake, as to the way in which we expect God to speak to us.

We look to find it in something great and magnificent. We should all like to be spoken to in that way. We should all like to be spoken to by a prodigy.

But the Lord does not often do that. He is too great to do that. It belongs to everything which is really great, that it acts simply. The infinite God does all His works in the simplest manner possible. And the Lord does everything in a way to show His own power. If the machinery were great, the mover might be little. The earthquake is greater than the voice. But God is greater, when He does a thing by His voice—still and small—than when He does it by an earthquake. Therefore God does not do it by an earthquake; but does it by the still small voice.

We have all sometimes been present, when a preacher, in the midst of his congregation, pours out his torrents of fervid eloquence, till every feeling trembles with emotion, and every soul is on fire with the sympathy of his burning thoughts.

And it is very natural for some one who enters that church to think, 'What an embassy from heaven is here ! What conversions there will be in this church !'

Yet, perhaps, all the while, God is not there. The hallowed mind, the prayerful frame, the Spirit, they are all absent there. There has been the wind, but 'the Lord was not in the wind;' there was the earthquake, but 'the Lord was not in the earthquake;' there was the fire, but 'the Lord was not in the fire.' The still small voice did not speak: and souls go away admiring, excited, agitated; but there has been no intercourse with heaven !

How often, again, in the midst of the sublimities of nature, a spectator, gazing from some high mountain range, has been fain to cry out, 'What an aid to devotion ! what a ladder up to heaven !' Who has not exclaimed, when the thunder-cloud has rolled its awful peal, 'Surely this is the voice of God !'

And yet it is to be questioned, whether ever one soul of man was drawn to God by the contemplation of the glory of creation: or, whether ever one man received, indeed, his call to grace in the summons of the storm.

Men have lived their threescore years and ten—in all the frequency

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of nature's most eloquent works, and from the cradle to the grave, they have not found God, for He is not in the wind; and He is not in the earthquake; and He is not in the fire; but He is in the still small voice.

Or, it may happen thus. Some great and overwhelming catastrophe has occurred, some judgment has broken over our heads, the sudden stroke of death, has made its awful appeal; and one, with whom we have been long familiar, has been hurried in a moment to his grave: and the wisdom of man begins to argue: 'Surely now there will be a revival! The Lord will be recognised here. Surely in so loud a sign, hearts that never prayed before, will hear their Maker's bidding, and will lift up to Him a repentant cry!'

While we look for it, the solemn event passes by, and it is all forgotten. The still small voice has not been heard. The wind, and the earthquake, and the fire, have been only like a pageant when it is past.

We must be very careful to put things in their right proportion; and not to disparage any of God's dealings.

It very often pleases God to make use of external displays of His power, to make way for the working of His grace; only, I say, He is jealous to show that these external circumstances are never themselves the grace.

Let us not despise them. The most earnest sermon that was ever preached cannot convert; but, if God pleases, it can awaken the slumbering feelings in a man's heart.

The grandeur of the most awful scenery can never declare the gospel to the beholder; but may humble him into a deep sense of his own insignificance. . . .

We would not under-rate the wild prelude that ushers in the harmony. God delights to write out His love in the background of His terrors.

Only men are wont to trace back the work of grace in their own, or other's hearts, to external circumstances.

We speak of men being 'converted by a sermon.' We speak of men being 'changed by affliction.' Yet the sermon, or affliction, was no more than the external scaffolding. It was not they who brought the soul to God. They, perhaps, led a man to think. They sent him to his Bible. They drove him to his knees. There the little still small voice, the invisible monitor, the Holy Spirit's inward influences—that did the work.

Without that, nothing else ever sent a soul to Christ! Without that, all is as silent as the winds of yesterday!

Oh, let me ask you, how often has the chill blast of affliction

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blown upon you? how often has the earthquake shaken the roots of life, with you? how often has a hot fire been kindled about you? But, where is the still small voice? Has it been heard in the inner chambers of your soul?

But let us leave this. Let us turn to look at the matter on a larger field of thought.

When God first created man, He drew the creature, which He had formed, to Himself, with the most winning forms of love.

In a beautiful paradise, His voice talked with man in the stillness of the evening hour. Need I say how that voice grew silent?

Then God proclaimed Himself in the wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire.

The deluge swept in its fury. The earth trembled at its Creator's descent. Sinai glared with His lightnings. The law came in all its terror. Every display of the Almighty set forth the offended holiness of His dreadful majesty. Judgment rolled over judgment; but God, in all His attributes, was still an unknown God, on His own earth.

Then it was that, gently, and wellnigh unnoticed by the world—in a scene so poor, and a form so mean, that man regarded it not—the Eternal Word, the still small voice of God, came to Bethlehem; in the very midst of the fire of the Father's vengeance, He came. He came to tell what the law could never tell—a just God of love—that God was not in the wind; and that God was not in the earthquake; and that God was not in the fire; but that God was only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And was not Jesus God's still small voice, when, in His human garb, He walked the plains of Galilee, and declared His Father's glory, and His Father's will? The bruised reed He never broke; the smoking flax He never quenched. He did not strive, nor lift up His voice in the street.

Despised in His littleness, that voice was, nevertheless, the great power of Jehovah: and, calm as were those loving lips, they uttered the mandates that all worlds obeyed.

Evil spirits cowered at His presence: sickness, and sorrow, and death, fled before Him, where He went.

Against the dark background of the penal law, He declared the gospel's peace.

And when, on the mount of Beatitudes, that voice, long silent, began, in its own gentleness, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'—Sinai's trumpet grew silent! And when He stood, and called so lovingly, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest'—who remembered, then, any more, the blackness, and the darkness, and the

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tempest? And when, at last, those dying lips spoke those words of Godhead, 'It is finished!' did not every adoring angel, as he stooped to the sound, confess, that all the displays that had been made of God, in His own universe, in magnificence, were as nought, to that one still small voice of Calvary?

And, then, there came another day. The Church was collected together, and its number was one hundred and twenty; when, suddenly, the house shook where they were assembled, and the fire gleamed, and the flames sat upon the head of every one of them—that the fire, and the earthquake, and the wind, and the still small voice might meet together to honour the Spirit's work.

Oh! was it the trembling house that wrought conviction there? Was it the forked flame that lighted up every head? Was not it the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit that lighted every man's soul, so that, with new language, and new tongues, men proclaimed the wonders of God's grace?

But we have rather to do with what is the voice of God, as it now speaks to the souls of men.

We must be very jealously careful that we do not dare to legislate for the Spirit.

But we lay it down, that the voice of God must be like something very still and small.

You are to expect it, therefore, within you; and that, not in any very broad, and striking, and decisive manifestation, but like a whisper, a very fine little thread in a man's breast. It can speak, alike, in all places, at all times. You can never be sure that you are not going to be spoken to by God. You can never be sure that you are not actually hearing His voice: for, whenever the question arises in your mind, 'Is God speaking to me?'—you may be perfectly sure, by that sign, that the still small voice is at work.

But, at first, a man can scarcely believe that what is within him is God's voice. It is so exceedingly still, so perfectly calm and quiet. I do not say it is always so. Some are called in the hurricane; some are called in the fire; but, for the most part, it is, as when Elijah heard it, very still, and very small.

There is a slight drawing that you feel here; there is another little drawing you feel there. Yesterday, you felt it; and it is repeated again to-day. Something that simply said to you, 'That is wrong!' Something that whispered in your ear, 'That will come up in judgment!' Or, something rose up in your mind, that seemed to say to you, 'I must go to Christ; I must make a change; I must give up my present way of life. I will go and read my Bible.' Or, there is a whisper, 'Jesus is quite ready to receive you. God is waiting for you. Go, and be His child. He is calling you.'

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Oh, that voice may be still and small; but, if God will, you shall hear it, as though it thundered.

It is not the loudest notes that always go the deepest, or dwell the longest. They say, a sigh lingers the longest in the deserts of Africa. God's voice will be heard in a man's conscience, with tremendous power, if God determines to make it powerful; and a man cannot resist it. You may fly over seas; but you will hear it there. You may rush into riot; but you will hear it there. It is omnipresent and omnipotent. It is the same still small voice.

A man is listening to a sermon—hearing it like a tale—suddenly, something comes across him, and says, 'That is me.' That is 'God's still small voice.'

A man is in affliction. He hears it, as if somebody said in his ear, 'There is rest for you in Christ.' That is God's still small voice.

A man lies on his bed at night. he thinks suddenly, 'Oh, what a sin I committed during the day. I must down upon my knees, and ask God to forgive me.' That is God's still small voice.

A man is not well. It strikes him suddenly, 'I think I shall die soon—what will become of my soul? Am I prepared to meet God?' That is God's still small voice.

A man rushes into a scene of gaiety and dissipation, and hears the words, 'What doest thou here?' That is God's still small voice.

A man has a relation, and it occurs to him, 'Have I ever spoken to that man about his soul?' That is God's still small voice.

A man is under burden of sin. Suddenly his memory awakes, and he hears, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin.' That is God's still small voice.

A man is dying; although he does not see any one standing by him, a voice says to him, 'Fear not, I am with thee.' That is God's still small voice.

If God speaks to men like this, in what an attitude ought that man to be who wishes to hear it? Is not it everything? Such a voice is not very likely to be heard in the din and noise of life. Are not secret places, tranquil hours, those where such visits might be expected? Must not a man who would hear God be still in his closet—much in prayer—often alone—a quiet man?

It is a very little thing if a man resists a sermon; but if there be any man to whom the still small voice has been really speaking—and he resists that?

Do you know, that that very voice, which has been remonstrating so gently with you, is the same that, one day, is to pronounce your eternal sentence? When that voice sounds from the judgment-seat, so awfully, and the heavens shall melt away before it, how will you

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bemoan that you had not trifled with it—when so still, and calm, and quiet, the other side of the grave!

When Elijah heard that still small voice, ‘he wrapped his face in his mantle’—confession of sin—‘and went out, and stood in the entering-in of the cave’—a position of expectation.

I would it were so with those hearing me! I would that some of you, in whom the deep voice of conviction has been working so much of late, would go and cover your face for very sin! would cast yourself on your knees, and wait, till God should speak to you, from the mercy-seat!

You would not wait long. He would soon make His glory to pass by before you; and show you a token of His love. The still small voice would begin to fall very sweetly on your ear, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.’

But, if not, remember, you may hide yourselves now in the strongholds of sin, you may love to haunt the dark caves of ignorance, but the hour is coming, when the hurricane and the voice will meet you again. The hurricane, that shall disrobe the world; and the voice, ‘the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never can be quenched.’

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Pharisee.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. S. LUKE xviii. 10.

THE Pharisee was in his day the representative of the covenanted people. That is what made his case so serious—that he was the religious core of the race, its official organ. He was the spiritual eye with which Israel was to see its Messiah. In him Israel was to be tested as a people. According to his success or failure would it be determined whether the Son of Man in coming to His own should be recognised and received by His own or no. That is the tragedy of the gospel story. That is why our Lord’s disappointment at the Pharisee is so anxious and so bitter. They were His point of contact with the people as a whole, just because they were the guardians and preservers of that prophetic tradition which clung to the reality of Israel’s unique mission and to the hope of a Messianic rescue. The Scribes and Pharisees did sit in Moses’s seat. Our Lord does not dispute this. They were the living exponents of loyalty to the Mosaic law. So entirely did He acknowledge this that we know He adopted much of their method and habit. He presented Himself to the people in the character of a Rabbi, and that was His favourite name among

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His friends; the name by which Judas would salute Him when he would come before Him as His intimate friend, 'Master, Master,' and kiss Him; the name by which the Magdalene saluted Him on the Resurrection morning, 'Rabboni.' He moved about with His band of pupils, disciples, His children, the circle who sat at His feet as Paul at Gamaliel's, and who should become good scribes, instructed in bringing out of their treasures things new and old. He prepared them to bind and to loose, to give ethical judgments, to direct the discipline of the law, and He loved the parable, the enigmatical character of the story so characteristic of Rabbinical teaching; He was to be found in the synagogue, and He took His normal place there as an interpreter of Scripture; He adopted prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and, more than all, He made His own and sanctioned that peculiar body of doctrine which it was the work of the Pharisee to assert in his schools, that teaching which they had developed since the closing of the Canon as to angels and spirits, as to the judgment to come, as to the resurrection of the dead. This all became the very heart of our gospel, and our Lord unhesitatingly declared the Pharisees right in this, and the Sadducees wholly wrong. Therefore it is that S. Paul is perfectly honest when he proclaims himself in the midst of the hostile Jewish assembly to be still a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. It is no mere catch phrase used to divide his foes; it is perfectly true; he is but obeying his genuine Pharisaic leading when he believes in the resurrection of the dead. It is his old creed learned under Gamaliel, which he claims is verified in the raising of the dead. 'It is concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead that I am called in question.' The Pharisee was the heir of the covenant.

And the publican—what of him? In all this he had utterly and miserably failed. So far as he went, as his influence acted, God's covenant would have utterly lapsed; the chosen people would be blended and fused and lost in the vague host of hopeless Gentiles, the prophetic hope of the Messiah would have died away into forlorn forgetfulness. For him the prophets have spoken in vain. He cherished nothing as a trust on the world's behalf; he had compromised, he had betrayed the cause, he had even paraded his disloyalty, for he had worn the livery of the conquering Roman; he made his own private gain out of his country's shame; he farmed for himself the very revenues which were the signal of her fall. So contemptible, so mercenary was his treachery, and our Lord never disguises His condemnation of the publican's career: He classes it with harlotry.

And how, then, can we even picture the indignation and the scorn of the Pharisee at such a renegade, as he caught sight of him praying in the very temple which he so dishonoured? We, perhaps, know

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how a clergyman, who is a fervent total abstainer, burning with a sense of the fatality of drink, feels towards the odour of the reeking gin-palace which spreads its ruin through his parish. Can he believe in any moral goodness being at work in the man who profits by so vile a trade? Or we can think how difficult it is for a Nationalist in Ireland to give any credit at all to the motives of a man who seems to him to betray his own people in their misfortunes by land-grabbing; and the Pharisee must have seemed to himself to be justified in adding to all such scorn as this the righteous condemnation of God's judgment on a treacherous Israelite who had broken his word. So we can imagine a little, perhaps, of the horror and contempt: 'Thank God I am not like that; not an extortioner, not an adulterer; and, thank God, not like that publican there.' So the Pharisee stood praying in the house of his God, that house to whose honour he deemed himself so faithful.

So after his prayer he passed down to his house. We can see him—the complacent assurance on his face, in his gait, in the very folds of his garment with broad fringes; how absolutely convinced of his rightness; how tough and squarely strong he moves along there among the unclean Gentiles, holding aloof, lifting his skirts. He has the look of a man who has a position to dignify, an attitude to sustain. Wherever he entered he would be offered the chief seat, and he knows it, and he likes it, and he wears the look of the scientific expert, too, who knows so much more than others of the true mind of God. He has the entry there, he has unlocked the secrets, he is in possession. The crowd who do not know the rules and traditions, they must be accursed; they are daily defiling themselves in the Gentile crowd, either through ignorance or negligence; but he knows exactly what ought to be done and what not, and he can account for everything he does, can give you chapter and verse, and a definite opinion to justify him. In eye, in voice, in gesture, we read the confident complacency of the self-occupied, self-approving man, who could so easily put the whole world straight if only it would let him, the man who never loses the consciousness of the 'Thank God I am not as other men are.' He goes down to his house, sketched, as we know, for us with such brilliant irony by one who knew him well, sketched there as the man who boasted that he is a Jew and rests upon the law, and glories in God and knows the divine will, and can precisely discern the things that are excellent, instructed as he is out of his law, and is quite confident that he is meant to be a guide for the blind, a light for them that sit in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of those who are to him as mere babes. So he looks to us as we watch him home.

I. Something is wrong. What is it? We can learn well enough,

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for we can go behind that hard, outward shell of the man, we can read in the secret places of his heart; for one who once was even as he has told us what is behind that screen. Something was at work, he tells us, which terribly belied that confident, self-sufficient exterior. What was it? What does this Pharisee who has unbosomed himself to us, tell us of it? What did he find? Did he find that the law to which he had adhered bred in him that smooth, self-reliant approval? Was there not another voice with which it spake? Lo, lo! down within the inner man a voice of reproof, of conviction. This law up to which he pressed as into the embrace of God, had in it the sharpness of a sword dividing joints and marrow. True, it was in itself just and good and holy; true, that in the inward will he, the man, the Pharisee, could himself delight and approve of it, and welcome it, and find it a joy; but then the very will that was rejoiced—had it not a strange, uncomfortable impotence? The will rejoiced indeed, but the man could not do what he willed; nay, the man did that which he willed not, that which he abhorred. The will was there to do, approving the law, responding to the law, but the man himself was a prisoner in other hands, swept away by that which he would not, a slave to that carnal desire which he and the law condemned. That was what happened, and the nearer he pressed to the law the more obvious and painful became this dualism. S. Paul, who tells us all this, may possibly be using the full law of the gospel to read out what had gone on in him as a Pharisee; he may be giving it a clearer outline, a more emphatic significance than would have been possible to him in the old days before he believed; but the struggle still was there in him—the split that had shown itself then. The law itself had found out a sin that was far from being as honey in the mouth; it had a bitter taste. All this was there. The sense of impotence was growing more and more horrible, and so Paul the Pharisee tells us that it was what was going on within him. But if that dark secret was suspected in the innermost recesses of the man, what of that outward Pharisaic complacency, that smooth self-assurance? There could be but one explanation. The Pharisee was stifling that conscience within him, was silencing the law in his heart. That sense of dislocation was there, S. Paul assures us. It was the immediate result of the law itself. It was through the law that he became conscious of it. The law worked in him the knowledge of sin. Ever he heard there that unspoken whisper: ‘Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou who gloriest in the law, dishonourest thou God?’ That was the dreadful penetrating whisper which he, the Pharisee of Pharisees, carried about with him.

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II. And others must have known the whisper even as he. All who were true to themselves knew it, and yet their public life was wholly to belie it, to conceal it; and those who knew it not must have been false either to themselves or to the law; they must have kept it under, have smothered it, have hushed up its hidden cry; they must have deceived themselves; otherwise, if they had been honest, there would have been in their faces, in their eyes, not that hard, unpitiful self-assurance, but a scared look of fear, of humiliating anxiety; the sense of a miserable disclosure of weakness; the look of a wounded animal, plaintive, sympathetic, appealing; the anguish of voice ever breaking out into, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' This there must have been, and in hushing this all up, in choking this self-revelation, they were what our Lord called them—hypocrites, self-deceivers. Hypocrites—and how serious the sin, for it is self-deceit within a spiritual mind itself. It was in the very motions with which they sought and served God that their hypocrisy lay—not in the lower man, but in the very highest—falsehood secreted within the very heart and the innermost intention with which they gave themselves up to the divine law. They deceived themselves into thinking they were loyal to God just in that very point in which they were disloyal to the law that ought to have convicted them of sin.

And such a sin has a peculiar terror about it, that it is, if left alone, past cure. For cure must depend on the power to recognise the need of cure, and this recognition can only come from a conscience that stands above the sin and condemns it by a higher standard. But what then if the higher standard be itself just that which has not arrived? What if it be the conscience itself which is disturbed? There is no criterion left by which to test and to detect wrong. We reach the truth of Plato's old paradox, that it is worse to do wrong without knowing it than knowing it. In the deepest sense that must be true. So long as the wrong is known to be wrong the man's moral insight is unperverted, his judgment is sane, sound, and uncorrupt; at any moment recovery may be open to him, for he has still the spiritual eye to see that the law is just and good and holy, even though he be led captive by a carnal self. But the man who does wrong thinking it to be right gives evidence of a far more radical evil, he shows that the spiritual eye is blind, and our Lord has warned us how great is that darkness; his moral judgment is itself in a diseased condition; his innermost heart is corrupt; he has no inner self now that he can disentangle from the guilt, and say, 'It is not I that sinned, but sin that sinneth in me,' and therefore left to himself he is shut off from the possibilities of repentance, for there is no standard in him to which any preacher can make appeal. The open sinner, the publican, the man who surrenders himself to a law

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of God is spared this deeper moral peril. He does not use his conscience, and therefore he is not saved from the danger of opposing it. He knows that he is wrong; he does not mistake wrong for right. The publicans cannot entirely despise themselves for what they did as much as the Pharisees did. Their inner voice may at any moment be roused, be considered, be obeyed. The way of recovery is open. But the Pharisee, what can be done for him? The inner voice was already obeyed, only it gave no true and honest utterance. It was this inner voice itself which was at fault. It ought to be sending up the cry, 'O wretched man that I am!' and, instead, it is ever repeating, 'Thank God I am not as other men are!'

No wonder that our Lord was profoundly sensitive to the perils of the position; no wonder that ever and again He thundered out loud tones of warning, rebuke, and alarm. Other sins were simple to deal with, but here was a moral condition which called out all His resources; He spent Himself therefore, He risked His life in efforts to pluck the veil away from those blind eyes, to shame them into some suspicion of their sins; and surely not in vain, for in the Acts we read how many of those same Pharisees upon whom He poured out His denunciations did become obedient, did learn to join the company of publicans and harlots who had gone in before them. But still, though they personally found their entry, they had failed as representatives of the people to recognise the Messiah who had come to His own. They, the true heirs, were the last to receive Him, and Jerusalem has therefore never known the day of its visitation, and the house of which those Pharisees were the official guardians was left unto them desolate. They could not see Him, and we know why, just because of their own particular and peculiar sin. They saw no need for their own deliverance from any captivity. If only they had been listening to that which S. Paul knew so well, that anguish which was ready ever to break out in the cry, 'Who shall deliver me?' then they would have known the Messiah, the very sense of need would have given them eyes to see and ears to hear. So our Lord told them when they asked by what authority He did these things. We know how He challenged them with the baptism of John, that embodied a confession of impotent repentance, yet a repentance that found no adequateness in its own confession—a repentance that still, therefore, in its abasement, confessed its own failure to remove sin, and looked out for another—for Him who should come with the availing baptism, the baptism of fire, for one who should indeed be to them as the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. Why did the Pharisee not understand that message of the Baptist? Was it only for the sinner, and not for the earnest and the devout? Yet those who came nearest to the

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Lord and closest to God ought to have known more, and not less, of the captivity of sin, for it was the law which gave them the knowledge of sin. Why did they not receive with their knowledge, through their devotion to the law, the baptism of John? That was the primary question which determined by what authority Jesus stood purging in His own temple. The baptism of John was the test which proved the self-deceit of the Pharisee. The publicans and harlots at least had known what the Baptist meant, and, so knowing, they saw the Lamb of God which would take away their sin. They, the blind, saw; the Pharisees who saw were proved blind. 'I am come that they who see not may see, and that they who see may be made blind.'

III. We, too, are Pharisees; we fall under the woe of the Pharisees, whenever our advance, if such it be, in religious life, ceases to increase and intensify our sense of penitence. It is the same now as with them in this matter. If we are loyal to the service of God, if we are indeed committed to the way of Christ, this must always mean that we see deeper and deeper into the dread mystery of our own sin, and are filled with ever profounder shame at the sight that there we see. This must be so by the very law of holiness, for holiness in man is simply the natural outcome of the forces of grace within us. It means that the powers thrown into our beings by God's creative and recreative breath, and issuing from us in their normal shape, put out their proper missions, find unhindered freedom of action, so that even if man's holiness were perfect he could no more think of praising himself for it, or flattering himself for it, than he can do so for taking his breath in the right way. He would but joyfully recognise in himself the free passage of God's out-pourings, and would give thanks that he was so fearfully and wonderfully made. That, if his holiness were perfect; but what irony in the very supposition! What we presume to call our holiness is but a broken shadow of this which might have been. It is but the slow, painful, fragmentary, disappearing recovery of some faint suggestion of all that God would have done if we had not hindered and denied Him. Such broken gleams of goodness as appear in us, do but serve to open our eyes to the vision of what we have lost. We had not even dreamed of the close Fatherhood of God and all that He was longing to pour out upon us; and if now by some possible effort of obedience we just begin to understand it, we gain at last some slight estimate of the burden, the weary weight of sin with which we have hitherto held down the mercy of God and forbidden it to save us. Oh, if the response were so great, so graciously given to our pitiful and tardy efforts, what would He not have done if we could have given Him a whole heart and a sound service; what promises were waiting! what

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honey out of a stony rock, and the uttermost parts of the heathen for our possession, if only we had hearkened! Without some touch of holiness we cannot even guess at all this that has been held back. We must have drunk some drop from His cup even to know this state of things. We can never sufficiently know, and, therefore, never sufficiently sorrow for our sins, and our advances in sanctity are just enough to reveal the fulness with which Christ is all in all. Woe! The tears, the shame, the humiliation, with which we recognise all that the bad years have now made impossible. Too late, too late we learn to do more now than offer to Jesus the broken fragments of wasted hours which He is patient enough to gather in, with the contrite and broken heart, which even now He will not despise. Something He will even yet of His pity do with us, but how poor and profitless the years that have brought Him nothing but the wreckage, the waifs and strays, of all the fair hopes with which our lives were bound. For those who serve Christ with any loyalty at all, self-satisfaction, self-applause, self-complacency, become the one absolute impossibility, and praise from other men for their goodness would be to such a sharp and poignant distress, against which they would produce a real agony. Pharisaism is impossible to us if we are honest to Christ. The two are so utterly incompatible they cannot co-exist.

Therefore in our management of our souls, as we are led by God's grace to give more care and pains to ourselves, let us be quickly suspicious of anything that seems to us like a spiritual advance if we do not find it tends also to deepen our spirit of penitence. Not that the religious life will be joyless or morose. No, but the thrilling joys that break out upon us as the strong force of God, the blessed Father, is felt once again stirring and alive within us, will themselves be to us the manifestation of all that we have done and still are doing to disappoint so gracious a Father, and to degrade so wonderful a love.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

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II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

The Primary Truths.

I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. I CORINTHIANS XV. 3, 4.



THE starting-point of the whole argument of this chapter will be found in the two verses which form our text. The Apostle opens by reminding the Corinthians that 'among the first things' which he delivered to them, when he commenced his teaching, were two great facts about Christ: one was His death, the other was His resurrection.

The passage seems to me to open up two subjects of deep interest, and to them I shall invite your attention to-day.

I. For one thing, let us mark well the primary truths which S. Paul delivered to the Corinthians.

II. For another thing let us try to grasp the reasons why S. Paul assigns to these truths such a singularly prominent position.

I. What then were the things which the Apostle preached first of all (*ἐν πρώτοις*) at Corinth?

Before I answer that question I ask you to pause a while and realise the whole position which S. Paul occupied when he left Athens and entered Corinth.

Here is a solitary Jew visiting a great heathen city for the first time, to preach an entirely new religion, to begin an aggressive evangelistic mission. He is a member of a despised people, sneered at alike by Greeks and Romans, isolated and cut off from other nations, in their own little corner of the earth, by their peculiar laws and habits, and unknown to Gentiles either for literature, arms, arts, or science. The bodily presence of this bold Jew is weak, and his speech, compared to that of Greek rhetoricians, contemptible. He stands almost alone in a city, famous all over the world, even in the estimate of the heathen, for luxury, immorality, and idolatry—*Non cuivis homini, contingit adire Corinthum!* Such was the place and such was the man! A more remarkable conjuncture it is hard to conceive.

And what did this solitary Jew tell the Corinthians? What did he say about the great Head and Founder of the new faith which he wanted them to receive in place of their ancient religion? Did he begin by cautiously telling them how Christ lived, and taught, and

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worked miracles, and spake as no man ever spake? Did he tell them that He had been rich as Solomon, victorious as Joshua, or learned as Moses? Nothing of the kind! The very first fact he proclaimed about Christ was that He died, and died the most ignominious death—the death of a malefactor, the death of the cross.

And why did S. Paul lay so much stress upon Christ's death rather than His life? Because, he tells the Corinthians, 'He died for our sins.' A deep and wonderful truth that, a truth which lay at the very foundation of the whole religion which the Apostle came to preach! For that death of Christ was not the involuntary death of a martyr, or a mere example of self-sacrifice. It was the voluntary death of a Divine Substitute for the guilty children of Adam, and by it He made atonement for the sin of the world. It was a death of such mighty influence on the position of sinful man before God, that it provided complete redemption from the consequences of the Fall. In a word, he told the Corinthians that when Christ died He died as the representative of guilty man, to make expiation for us by the sacrifice of Himself, and to endure the penalty which we deserved. 'He bore our sins in His own Body on the tree.' 'He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.' 'He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' A great and stupendous mystery, no doubt! But a mystery to which every sacrifice from the time of Abel had been continually pointing for four thousand years. Christ died 'according to the Scriptures.'

The other great fact about Christ which S. Paul placed in the front part of his teaching, was His resurrection from the dead. He boldly told the Corinthians that the same Jesus who died, and was buried, came forth alive from the grave on the third day, and was seen, touched, handled, and talked to, in the body, by many competent witnesses. By this amazing miracle He proved, as He had frequently said He would, that He was the promised and long-expected Saviour foretold in prophecy, that the satisfaction for sin He had made by His death was accepted by God the Father, that the work of our redemption was completed, and that death, as well as sin, was a conquered enemy. In short, the Apostle taught that the greatest of miracles had been wrought, and that with such a Founder of the new faith he came to proclaim, first dying for our sins, and then rising again for our justification, nothing was impossible, and nothing wanting for the salvation of man's soul.

Such were the two great truths to which S. Paul assigned the first place, when he began his campaign as a Christian teacher at Corinth: Christ's vicarious death for our sins: Christ's rising again from the grave. Nothing seems to have preceded them: nothing to have

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been placed on a level with them. No doubt it was a sore trial of faith and courage to a learned and highly-educated man like S. Paul to take up such a line. Flesh and blood might well shrink from it. He says himself, 'I was with you in weakness and fear, and in much trembling.' But by the grace of God he did not flinch. He says, 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'

Nor did the case of Corinth stand alone. Wherever the great Apostle of the Gentiles went he preached the same doctrine, and in the same place and proportion. He addressed very different hearers, and people of very different minds. But he always used the same spiritual medicine, whether at Jerusalem or Pisidia, Antioch, or Iconium, or Lystra, or Philippi, or Thessalonica, or Berea, or Athens, or Ephesus, or Rome. That medicine was the story of the Cross and the Resurrection. They crop up in all his sermons and Epistles. You never go far without coming across them. Even Festus, the Roman governor, when he tells Agrippa of Paul's case, describes it as hingeing on 'one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.'

1. Now let us learn for one thing what were the leading principles of that religion, which eighteen centuries ago came forth from Palestine, and turned the world upside down. The veriest infidel cannot deny the effect that it produced on mankind. The world before and the world after the introduction of Christianity were as different worlds as light from darkness, night and day. It was Christianity that starved idolatry, and emptied the heathen temples; that stopped gladiatorial combats, elevated the position of women, raised the whole tone of morality, and improved the condition of children and the poor. These are facts which we may safely challenge all the enemies of revealed religion to gainsay. They are facts which form one of the gravest difficulties of infidelity. And what did it all? Not, as some dare to say, the mere publication of a higher code of duty, a sort of improved Platonism without root or motive. No! it was the simple story of the Cross of Calvary, and the empty sepulchre in the garden, the marvellous death of One 'numbered with transgressors,' and the astounding miracle of His Resurrection. It was by telling how the Son of God died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that Apostles and Apostolic men changed the face of the world, gathered mighty churches, and turned countless sinners into saints.

2. Let us learn for another thing what the foundation of our own personal religion must be, if we really want inward spiritual comfort. That the early Christians possessed such comfort is as plain as the sun at noonday. We read repeatedly in the New

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Testament of their joy, and peace, and hope, and patience, and cheerfulness, and contentment. We read in ecclesiastical history of their courage and firmness under the fiercest persecution, of their uncomplaining endurance of sufferings, and their triumphant deaths. And what was the mainspring of their peculiar characters, characters which excited the admiration even of their bitterest enemies, and puzzled philosophers like Pliny? There can only be one reply. These men had a firm grasp of the two great facts which S. Paul proclaimed first and foremost to the Corinthians, the Death and Resurrection of their great Head, Jesus Christ the Lord. Let us never be ashamed of walking in their steps. It is cheap and easy work to sneer at 'dogmatic theology' and old-fashioned creeds and modes of faith, as if they were effete and worn-out things, unfit for this enlightened nineteenth century. But, after all, what are the fruits of modern philosophy, and the teaching of cold abstractions, compared to the fruits of the despised dogmas of distinctive Christianity? If you want to see peace in life, and hope in death, and consolation felt in sorrow, you will never find such things except among those who rest on the two great facts of our text, and can say, 'I live by faith in the Son of God, who died for my sins, and was raised again for my justification.'

II. Let me turn now to another aspect of the subject before us. We have seen what the truths were which S. Paul proclaimed in the first place to the Corinthians, and what were the effects which they produced. Let us now try to grasp and examine the reasons why he was led to assign them such a prominent position.

The inquiry is a very interesting one. I cannot hold with some that S. Paul adopted this course only because he was commissioned and commanded to do so. I think the reasons lie far deeper than this. Those reasons are to be sought in the necessities and condition of fallen human nature. I believe that man's wants could never have been met and satisfied by any other message than that which S. Paul brought to Corinth; and if he had not brought it, he would have come thither in vain.

For there are three things about man in every part of the world which force themselves on our notice, whenever we sit down to examine his nature, position, and constitution. He is a creature with a sense of sin and accountableness at the bottom of his heart; a creature continually liable to sorrow and trouble from his cradle to his grave;—and a creature who has before him the certainty of death, and a future state at last. These are three great facts which stare us in the face everywhere, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Travel all over the world, and they meet you, both among the most highly educated Christians, and the most untutored savages. Go

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about our own country, and study the family life of the most learned philosophers, and the most ignorant peasants. Everywhere, and in every rank and class, you will have to make the same report. Everywhere you will find these three things: sorrow, death, and the sense of sin. And the position I boldly take up is this: that nothing can be imagined or conceived more admirably suited to meet the wants of human nature than the very doctrine which S. Paul began with at Corinth—the doctrine of Christ dying for our sins and rising again for us from the grave. It fits the need of man, just as the right key fits the lock.

It would have been worse than useless if S. Paul had begun his work at Corinth by telling men to be virtuous and moral, and keeping back Christ. It is just as useless now. It even does positive harm. To awaken human nature, and then not show it God's prescription may lead to most mischievous consequences. I know no case so pitiable as that of the man who sees clearly sin, sorrow, and death on one side and does not see clearly Christ dying for sins and rising again for sinners on the other. Such a man is just the person to sink into flat despair, or to take refuge in the delusive theology of the Church of Rome. No doubt we may sleep the sleep of unconversion for many years, and feel nothing of spiritual doubts and fears. But once let a man's conscience become uneasy, and crave peace, and I know no medicine which can cure him, and keep him from soul-ruining error, except the first things which S. Paul delivered at Corinth,—I mean the two doctrines of Christ's Cross and Resurrection.

BISHOP RYLE.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Confession and Petition.

God, be merciful to me a sinner. S. LUKE xviii. 13.



T is to the publican that I desire chiefly to direct your attention; and I shall treat these well-known words first as a confession, and then as a petition.

I. First, then, the well-known words are a confession. 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' They are obviously and necessarily a confession of sin, grounded, as the words themselves show us, upon a deep conviction of sin.

And, first, mark that there is an individuality in the conviction, and in the confession to which the conviction leads. I do not simply

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refer to the fact that he speaks of himself emphatically, in the original, as 'the sinful one,' but I refer to the fact that he gives no thought to others; he draws no invidious contrast between himself and others who may be as bad or worse; but he says, 'God, be merciful to me.' Now, I will ask you to mark this, because this is far more than a simple confession of the general corruption of his nature. It is far more than a general confession that he, in common with the rest of mankind, is more or less sinful before God. This is the way our church-goers get off on Sunday. This is the way in which so many of you, perhaps, are quite content to say, 'I am a miserable sinner.' You have no objection to be as miserable a sinner as the miserable sinners around you. You have no objection to make the humblest confession,—to use the words of strongest self-abasement, as long as they are words which are applicable generally to those with whom you are worshipping. And so it is that, Sunday after Sunday, in the lowly confession of the Church, men and women join who are very far from the spirit of the publican, and who would be very grievously offended if the preacher were to point to them, and to say, 'These are your sins. You individually are a sinner.' I say, then, that the publican so confessed his sins, with such an individuality of conviction, and with such an individuality of acknowledgment before God, as that he did not take off the edge of the confession. He did not take off the edge of his self-humiliation by simply throwing himself into a mass of other persons. It is, 'God, be merciful to me.'

And, in order that we may follow his example, and may be humbled before our God because of our sins, and may seek for His mercy, it becomes us to examine into our own hearts and lives, according to the standard of God's word. What do ye more than others?

If we would have real conviction of sin, if we truly want to see ourselves as we are in the sight of God, if we do not want to deal with this matter superficially, but want to go into our own character and position and prospects honestly, we must consider our sins as they are aggravated by the advantages which we may possess.

II. But the confession, you will observe, is thrown into the form of a petition, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinful one—one whose sin seems to stand out so peculiarly and with such aggravation as that I may call myself, emphatically, the sinful one.' And let me say, before I pass on, that it is always a very bad sign when any professions of repentance are accompanied with extenuating circumstances and with self-apology before God.

Here is no pleading of extenuating circumstances, and no throwing off the guilt upon others, but a very remarkable word is used for this 'be merciful to me.' It is a word which implies the idea, not of

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vague mercy, and mercy shown by any and every means, but it is mercy in the sense of being propitiated; and, if I were to translate it quite literally, the translation of the prayer would be, 'God, be propitiated to me a sinner.'

I ask you to take this confession and petition of the publican home with you. I am well aware that the subject upon which I have been preaching, however seasonable, is not a welcome one. It is not a subject that people care very much to hear about, for, beyond a certain point, we do not like to look very much into our own hearts. When once we begin to search into them, and to read our past lives and our present character in the light of God's Word, there is so much that is humbling, so much that lays us in the very dust, so much that may make us for a while even doubt whether any work of grace has been begun in us at all, that it is, I am afraid, an employment from which we often turn. Be persuaded of this, that where there is a deep real work of grace, there is deep and growing conviction of sin. Give me this as an element of the work of grace in the soul, and I believe it to be one of the most satisfactory evidences we can have that the work is, indeed, of God.

CANON MILLER.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Christians instructed by Baal's Priests.

And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. 1 KINGS xviii. 26.



THE conduct of these ministers of an idol is well fitted to put to shame the disciples of Christ; so that, when we pass in thought to the grand scene on Mount Carmel, we ought to feel as much rebuked by what we observe in the champions of falsehood, as animated by the deportment and success of the champion of truth. For once, then, put yourselves under the teaching of idolaters: the ministers of Christ are going to give way to the ministers of Baal, and allow them to take the place of instructors of the people. There are two or three great respects in which, as we think, Baal's priests set us a most instructive example.

I. We shall begin first with noticing their zeal: they were willing

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to suffer, as you read, 'and cut themselves with knives and lancets until the blood gushed out.' And assuredly the zeal and self-devotion with which idolaters will act on their mistakes, ought to put us to the blush for the lukewarmness and cowardice which we often display in acting on our truths. It might be thought, if you were to draw your conclusions from the deportment of the great mass of Christians, that it had been the object of the gospel to release men from all that rigour and all that self-chastisement which natural religion had always more or less dictated. But on the contrary, the gospel has only corrected erroneous notions as to what this rigour should be, and as to how the chastisement should be applied: the severest rules that were ever laid down by the Indian devotee exceed not those prescribed by Christianity. What think ye of 'crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts'? What think ye of what has been read in the second lesson of this morning's service—of 'cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye'? It is all figure, you reply: it is all metaphor. I know it; and the Indian devotee might be regarded as taking literally what was designed to be spiritually understood. But is there no meaning in the figure? Is nothing denoted by the metaphor? Or rather, where there is such immense strength of figurative expression, is it only a light task or a nominal labour, which is enjoined on the disciples of Christ? Not so: scriptural statements may require to be spiritually interpreted; but some men seem to think that to interpret spiritually is to take away all the spirit, all the strength, from a passage. Where the figure is singularly energetic, the thing figured must be proportionably difficult or great: it were to accuse the Bible of the worst exaggeration, to suppose that it drew its metaphors from what is gigantic, when it had to delineate only what is trifling. Take heed, then, that ye deceive not yourselves. It is not without conflict, it is not without struggle, it is not without sacrifice, it is not without self-chastisement, that ye may look to be saved; and the question for your private, your instant consideration is, whether you are acting on the meaning of those precepts of the gospel which demand, under strong figures, the mortification of the flesh, and the surrender of everything which may be a hindrance to piety.

And here it is that the priests of Baal give their first lesson. They served a god whom they invested with sanguinary attributes, and to whom, as they supposed, it would be acceptable that they should lacerate their bodies whilst acting as his worshippers. And they did not at all shrink from doing what their creed required them to do. Listen to the description: 'They cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out.' You are to observe the expression, 'after their manner:' it implies a

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habit or a custom ; so that it was their usual practice thus to wound themselves when ministering at the altar of Baal. It was not that, on this very great occasion, when religion and even life were at stake, they were wrought up into a kind of frenzy, and therefore prompted to the doing what, in a moment of less excitement, they would have quite refused to do. It was 'their manner'; and, if the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed made them more than commonly prodigal of their blood, at least they were accustomed to shed it in performing the rites of their religion. Ah, Christians, can it be necessary for us to enlarge on the emphatic condemnation which those priests of Baal are pronouncing on yourselves? Will your zeal stand the being brought into comparison with theirs? Is it your manner, as it was theirs, to submit to precepts which impose painful duties, requiring you to give up what you might like to keep, or to undergo what you might like to avoid? We ask whether this be your manner? Not merely whether, on some grand solemnity, when thousands are gathered upon Carmel, and you are called upon to act in the sight of the world, you can perform an act of self-denial, resist a strong passion, or relinquish a favourite object; but whether it be your habit, when you are more withdrawn from public observation, when Carmel is exchanged for the greater privacy of your own households, or your own scenes of business, to keep a check on every evil propensity, and to labour, according to the direction of S. Paul, to present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God? Appetites, are they your masters, or are you theirs? Money, do ye consider yourselves as actually its proprietors, or only as stewards, who will have to give account of its distribution? Pleasures, do you abstain from those of whose lawfulness there may be doubt? Severities, do you practise those which appear likely to further the great ends of moral discipline? Alas, alas! Baal was better served than is Christ. Baal's yoke was heavy; but nevertheless it was borne: Christ's yoke is light; but how is it shifted off and evaded!

And will not, think you, the very heathen rise up against us in the judgment, and condemn us, if they inflict upon themselves excruciating torments, and wear down the body by incessant exactions, just because they find themselves so directed by a fabulous theology; whilst we, with all the advantages of a full revelation, grudge those sacrifices which are to be a thousandfold compensated, and throw off those restraints which, after all, would but make us masters of ourselves?

II. But we go on to a second and wholly different respect, in which the idolatrous priests may be considered as reading a great lesson to ourselves. They persevered in spite of the keen ridicule of Elijah. After having been for hours engaged in ineffectual supplication, you might have thought that they would have been abashed by such

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sarcastic words as these : 'He is a god : either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.' But, so far from being abashed and shrinking away with confusion of face, they seem rather to have been encouraged to the making fresh efforts to attract the notice and succour of their idol. And they were immeasurably more admirable in this, than had they not persevered in the face of persecution and violence. It is certain, whatever may be the causes to which the fact should be ascribed, that in the matter of religion, and perhaps in almost every other, there is nothing which men find it so difficult to bear as ridicule. They can brave a frown, but be quite daunted by a laugh ; and a sneer will appal them, when they would not have shrunk from a sword. When we deal faithfully with the young, and set honestly before them the difficulties they will have to encounter, if they separate from the world, and give themselves to the duties of religion, we always lay our main stress on the ridicule which they must expect to excite, requiring them to examine, before making their decision, whether they stand prepared to be counted 'fools for Christ's sake.' And it is mainly because this point is imperfectly examined, and the decision prematurely made, that we have so many instances of a falling away amongst the young—those who have begun to all appearance well, and with good promise of perseverance, relapsing, after a while, into the habits and associations which they had resolved to abandon. You will find, we believe, that, in the majority of cases, the lapse is to be traced to the power of ridicule. It is not that the young person grows unwilling to forego pleasures and to make sacrifices, with a view to his own eternal welfare. It is rather that, finding himself despised, and held in contempt, and sneered at by companions, he is induced to get back their good opinions by giving up his new principles. That there is immeasurable folly in this is a point on which, as you may all well perceive, it were a waste of time to spend argument ; but the melancholy thing is, that, in nine out of ten of the modes in which men lose their souls, there is no place for argument : the risk and the madness are self-evident ; but this does not make men one jot the more on their guard, not one jot the less willing to be deceived and destroyed. There is not one of you, neither do we suppose the man is anywhere to be found, who will be ready to go into a calculation of the for and against, and declare that he makes the balance on the side of irreligion and the world in preference to God.

III. But we must not yet displace these priests from the position of instructors ; they have another lesson to deliver, before we resume our office. They have furnished one lesson by their zeal, and a second by their courage : their zeal in being ready to suffer ; their

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courage, in being undaunted by ridicule. The third lesson is furnished by their importunity: they persisted in praying, though no answer was vouchsafed; and, in this respect, we think them yet more admirable than in the others. We have already said that amid the superstitions and errors of paganism might be discovered, if there were diligent search, many fragments of great truths, which can only be supposed to have been handed down by tradition, but which have become corrupted or mutilated in the lengthened transmission. And we believe that we should occasionally find the heathen holding fast a truth which, with all our superior information and advantages, we are disposed to let go. For it is one effect of revelation to invigorate reason; and reason, when made keener and more energetic, will suggest doubts and raise objections, which would hardly occur if the mind were less quickened. Hence a truth which might be received in simplicity and adhered to with tenacity by an idolater, may be lost or weakened amongst Christians; just because there is, unavoidably, a more questioning spirit, less willingness to take on trust, and to believe where we cannot explain. And may not this be partially the case in regard of the great matter of prayer? Many are disposed to question the possible efficacy of importunate prayer, grounding their objection on the confessed attributes of God; and arguing that it is like supposing God a creature, variable as one of ourselves, to suppose Him capable of being acted on by our reiterated petitions, but the truth is, that God having once commanded us to 'pray without ceasing,' His unchangeableness becomes a reason for praying without ceasing. It is here that His unchangeableness comes in: He has irrevocably fixed that we shall obtain such or such a blessing, if we reach a certain point in importunity; but that we shall miss it if we come short of that point. And thus, in place of any disagreement, there is the most thorough harmony between the truths that 'with God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' and that, nevertheless, we must ask if we hope to obtain—and that, not once, nor twice, but frequently, as those who know that importunity may prevail where there has been for a long time refusal.

H. MELVILL.

Elijah's Disappointment.

And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?
1 KINGS xix. 13.

THIS morning we read the story of Elijah's strength, of the double triumph of his faith, over the sins of man and over the delay of God's forgiveness for their sins. Like the righteous man

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described in the Psalm, 'his heart was established, and did not shrink, until he had seen his desire upon his enemies;' then, when it was known that the Lord was God in Israel, and that he was His servant, and that He had turned the people's heart back again, then he prayed with faith as steadfast as when he bore witness, or executed judgment, until 'the heavens were black with clouds and with wind, and there was a great rain;' nor was he then worn out with his work, but being strong in spirit even his body was strengthened: 'The hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.'

I. So ended the glorious day's work—the manifestation, as we said, of Elijah's strength. This chapter which we have read this evening shows us a picture not less noble of Elijah in his weakness. No sooner had the victory at Carmel been gained than it appeared that it was not yet to be decisive. Israel's heart was turned back again; all the people 'fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord He is the God: the Lord He is the God!' But Jezebel's heart was neither turned nor broken; she meant to continue the fight for Baal; Ahab would not resist her, and how could the people resist without him? 'When he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.' His servant, who certainly had been with him on Mount Carmel,—the Jews say it was the widow's son of Zarephath, whom he had raised from the dead,—had no doubt ministered to him at the sacrifice, and had watched with him for the rain while he prayed. Possibly the young man may have been as much in danger as his master; we at any rate know that he accompanied him in his flight. They went together into the land of Judah; there no doubt the good king Jehoshaphat would have protected them, though from what Obadiah says in the former chapter we may suppose that Ahab would have sent after him even there. At any rate, they did not think it wise to stop in Jerusalem or any of the nearer cities, but went on to Beersheba on the utmost border of the wilderness. And Elijah left his servant there. Here he was among friends, among worshippers of the Lord his God; here he was safe from fear and temptation, here he might enjoy all the blessings of communion with souls that were as his own: going with the multitude into the House of God, in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as keep holyday.

But Elijah did not stay there: 'He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness.' His soul was vexed within him, and he would carry his trouble alone to his God; he was troubled, not by the danger to his life, for that was past, but by the failure of his work. He was the only prophet of the Lord left in Israel: single-handed

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he had encountered the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and had prevailed; yet even after his victory he was forced to abandon the field. And the enemy had a force in reserve to occupy it, the four hundred prophets of the grove,—representatives, it seems, of a still more wicked worship than that of Baal,—now had the ear of king and people to themselves. It was as though all Israel were like the man described by our Lord, out of whom one unclean spirit was cast, but the soul was left empty until he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself. So Elijah felt: ‘I have laboured in vain: I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain;’ and he prayed to be allowed to retire from the hopeless battle: ‘It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.’

And as yet the Lord does not answer him, certainly does not rebuke him: He only sends him strength and comfort to sustain him till an answer should be sent; He gives him heavenly food, in the strength whereof he went, like Moses before him and Jesus after him, fasting for forty days and forty nights, yet not worn out nor weakened, through the wilderness unto Horeb, the mount of God. There God appeared unto him, not, as to Israel of old, in the likeness of devouring fire, but as we read—the words need nothing added to bring out their lesson—‘the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle’ (like Moses, ‘he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God’) ‘and went out, and stood in the entering-in of the cave, and behold, there came a voice unto him, saying, What doest thou here, Elijah?’ A very gentle rebuke, no doubt, spoken by the still small voice, but a rebuke still. There yet remained work to be done for God, that could not be done in the wilderness: why was not the one man there to do it who could do it? He gives his answer, an answer sufficient to justify himself before men, though not before God: he had done all he could, and all was in vain: ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: but the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.’

II. The first duty God lays on him in answer, the first promise He makes him, seems to admit that the failure was as complete as he thought it: the only thing was, that God could avenge the sins of Israel, if they could not be cured. Elijah is not sent back into the land of Israel, but, ‘Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus;’ then he is bidden to anoint Hazeal to chastise all Israel,

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and Jehu to chastise the house of Ahab: even Elisha, it is said, shall carry out any portion of God's vengeance that is not executed by these. If the work of God fails, the loss is not theirs who tried to do it, but theirs who prevented its being done: it is not Elijah who has to fear the sword of Jezebel, but Jezebel who has to fear the sword of Jehu. And to the fierce temper of Elijah the Gileadite, who was of another manner of spirit, our Lord confesses, than that which He has taught us by the Gospel, this consolation might have been enough, to know that he and his fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers would not be left unavenged. It might have been enough, or so at least men may think who know how the meekness and gentleness of Christ is foreshadowed even amid the terrors of the law. The Lord goes on to tell of a work for Elijah to do, and a fruit of the work he has done, very different from the cruel vengeance of Hazael, or even of Jehu: 'Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that hath not kissed him.'

And Elijah felt that that was his truest comfort and his highest duty. The call of Hazael and Jehu he left to wait for another generation; therefore if the vengeance must come, it might come when God pleased, but Israel should be allowed a longer trial first. All Elijah's own care was that the faithful seven thousand might not be left without a prophet, yea, that there might be a prophet who might even recall some of the faithless to their God. He had laboured, and saw no fruit of his labour; but if he went on a little while, and left Elisha to labour after him, he should see fruit. He learnt the spirit of those words which the prophet ascribes to a greater than Elijah: 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God: and now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.'

III. To labour much and have no profit is the curse God laid upon Cain; to labour much, and have just enough profit to live by, is what He laid upon Adam, and what we, while this world lasts and we are in it, must not expect to be free from. Not the first Adam only but the Second had to labour upon these terms; it was only out of the travail of His soul that He could see anything to satisfy Him, or receive any reward for His work. He wept for Jerusalem, and Jerusalem rejected Him—only a remnant escaped, whom the house of Israel cast out from themselves. Yea, why should we speak of Jerusalem or Israel? He died for all the world, and the elect only shall be saved by His death. Many have been jealous for Him, and

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would have it that He did not labour in vain nor spend His strength for nought—that if any were not saved it was because He did not die for them; but the Word of God declares too plainly the contrary. He died for all; He spared not a drop of His Blood, even though He might see no fruit of it even to the days of eternity; if they did perish, it should not be because He had not done enough to save them. He did not ask, ‘To what purpose is this waste?’ but poured out His love freely, over head and over feet, to be a sweet savour unto God, not only in them that are saved, but in them that perish.

And we also may learn the same lesson which Elijah learnt, may follow the example of unstinted love such as Jesus manifested. ‘Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.’ The result may not be, in human eyes, at all proportionate to the labour it cost; but the least thing done for God, or gained to His kingdom, is in truth worth more than all the labours of all mankind could be; those who work in faith are enabled by their faith to see things as God sees them, and therefore they can rejoice in their works as God does.

W. H. SIMCOX.

The Call of Elisha.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him. 1 KINGS xix. 19-21.

HERE we see one of the methods by which the prophetic ministry was propagated and maintained in Israel. It was not, you may have remarked, like the Jewish priesthood, a matter of hereditary descent. The son did not become a prophet because his father had been a prophet before him. Like Jeremiah each prophet was the subject of a special predestination to his work. ‘Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.’ But each prophet was called to his work by some especial token or influence, and then, either as a student in one of the colleges or schools of the prophets, as they were called, or as an attendant upon a great teacher, he received a kind of education for his future life.

Elisha appears to have been a man of substance. He was ploughing in the field with twelve yoke of oxen, at Abel-meholah, in the valley of the Jordan, when Elijah passed on his way back from the

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great vision which he had received in Horeb. Elijah does not seem to have spoken; he merely cast his mantle on Elisha, and then passed on. This act, indeed, was symbolical. It had, like many of the former acts of the prophets, such as rending the dress, or putting ashes on the head, an ascertained and recognised meaning. The prophet's mantle was a visible sign of the robe of spiritual power which encompassed him, and to cast the mantle on another was to call him to share the labour, the glory, the difficulty, the responsibility, the danger of the prophetic office. Although Elijah had not spoken, this significant action was perfectly understood. Elisha obeyed its purpose, and he ran after the silent prophet who was already vanishing from his sight. He had one, only one condition, he would just take leave of his parents and receive their blessing, and then he would follow the prophet. Elijah assents. But Elisha must return soon, considering the greatness of the destiny before him. The original would be here better rendered, 'Go, return, for how great a thing have I done unto thee!' Elisha is bent upon showing the undivided allegiance which he owes to the prophet, the completeness of his self-surrender. Up to that moment his farm on the banks of the Jordan had been his all, as in a later age their boats and nets had been everything to those fishermen on the Sea of Galilee who were also predestined to the Apostolate of the world. Elisha does not linger to drop regrets over a cherished past, from which he is parting for ever; he forthwith slays the oxen with which he had just been ploughing, and he takes even the plough tackling for fuel, by which he may burn their flesh, and he gives one parting entertainment to his acquaintances in the neighbourhood, that they may have no doubt either about his goodwill towards themselves, or of his fixed determination and lofty resolution, and then he leaves the scene of his labours, he leaves his fields, his home, his all, to become the servant of Elijah. Is this, think you, to be looked upon as only and strictly an incident in the life of an ancient prophet? Has it no permanent, no higher application? Has it no human significance?

There is some risk of blinding ourselves to the real meaning of the Old Testament, of its urgent and striking appeals to the human conscience, to the Christian life, by saying of this and that thing, it is only Oriental, and has therefore no relevancy for a modern European. Certainly there is a superficial element of custom and of ceremony in the life described in the Old Testament, which does belong to the ancient East, and which is untransferable to the circumstances of our own day and country. But human nature on the one side, and the great laws of God's providential dealings on the other, were in the East two thousand eight hundred years ago, exactly what they are now, and what occurred then was, as an Apostle says, 'written for our

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learning, that we through patience and comfort of the ancient Scriptures might have hope; hope, as well as other virtues, which are to be won from their perusal.

The call of Elisha has its place, not merely in the history of his order, not merely in the history of his country, but in the history of humanity, and as such it must be regarded as an astonishing instance of the power of religious influence. The silent prophet passes; he drops his mantle, and the life of another fellow-man is agitated to the centre, to its inmost depths; its whole current and direction is from that moment changed; he yields to an attraction; he does not analyse it, he obeys. And it may be well to ask ourselves in what—putting aside for to-day, but by no means ignoring it, the great question of God's supernatural grace—in what did this influence, viewed on its human side, in what did this attraction consist? For it is not to be supposed that the obedience of Elisha had nothing to do with those motives and laws of conduct which govern the actions of thoughtful and conscientious men now. It is not to be supposed that Elijah put forth some force which was literally magical, magical in such a sense, that it exerted upon Elisha's will an influence for which no account could be given in reason, a magnetic influence which could not but be obeyed. Had, indeed, this been the case, the interest of this history would have been shifted from the department of spiritual and moral life to the department of physical life, and it would be, perhaps, more properly investigated in some lecture-room than from the pulpit. No! mighty as was the influence of Elijah, Elisha's liberty was not restrained, still less destroyed by it. He was perfectly free to have resisted it. If he did not do so, if he yielded at once, if he decided instantaneously on an obedience which, as we may for the moment think, ought to have been preceded and justified by an exhaustive discussion, this was because there must have been a preparatory educational process going on for some time within him. He must have had his thoughts, affections, aspirations, which only waited the occasion to be combined, to be expressed in actions; and so when the great prophet passed by him, all the scattered reasons for being drawn towards him coalesced into a single ray of moral light and moral warmth, and determined his future disciple's course, impelled him to an act of such unreserved obedience.

It is, then, material to ask what must at least have been some of the motives which led Elisha thus to obey.

I. And, first, Elijah would have represented in Elisha's eyes a great cause, a great or imperious idea, or truth, which had lain for centuries in the soul of every Israelite; that idea was the existence, the manifestation of the one living and true God who had revealed Himself to Israel. For while the surrounding nations were in different

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degrees of heathen darkness and degradation, Israel by a singular exercise of God's favour, had been, indeed, chosen to know His will, and in that knowledge to know much, though by no means with all the fulness which we Christians now have the means of knowing Him, of His character, of His nature, of His attributes. To treasure that knowledge, to hand it on from generation to generation, to make it the inspiring principle of national as well as of individual thought and life, this was the appointed task of the sacred people, again and again prescribed in their sacred law, again and again enforced by the exhortations of their prophets, again and again illustrated by the lives and by the works of their most representative saints and leaders. In quiet times not merely every prophet, every member of the priesthood, and of the Levitical tribe, but even every Israelite in some sense represented this great truth, for every Israelite was admitted by circumcision into a covenant with God, which bound him to loyalty to God's revelation of Himself, just as every baptized Christian bears the sacred sign, as our baptismal service expresses it, 'in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.' In quiet times this representative duty of every believer in a revelation, towards the revelation which he believes, is accepted, at least in terms, without difficulty. It is only, as our Lord said, 'when persecution or tribulation ariseth because of the word,' that certain classes of character are, as a matter of course, offended.

When Elijah appeared upon the scene of history it seemed as if the revelations committed to Israel were on the point of being trodden out by a young and vigorous idolatry. The marriage of Ahab the king of Israel, with Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon, had led to the propagation of the queen's religion, the worship of the Phœnician Baal, one of those seductive varieties of worship of the vital forms of nature in a personified shape which exercised so extraordinary a sway over the imagination and reason of the ancient world, and which, although in modern times they have adopted a more refined guise, are by no means strange or unwelcome to the modern world. So seductive was that superstition, and so commanding the influence of the court, so vigorous, so trenchant the policy of the queen, that seven thousand was the total number of Israelites who had escaped the taint, who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. And at great trial times like these, great causes become almost necessarily identified with the names of individuals. Truths are, for a time, impersonated in a single man. And Elijah was to the revelation of the one God, Maker of heaven and earth, what at a later age

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S. Paul was to the truth of man's justification, through Christ's merits without legal obedience, at least in certain portions of the Church,—what S. Athanasius was, during the great Arian struggle, to the true Godhead of Jesus Christ, as it had been taught by the Apostles.

As men looked on Elijah moving rapidly from one scene of danger to another, in those troublous times, the whole history of the earlier, the old Mosaic revelation seemed to live again, seemed to speak in him; behind his individual voice and gesture there was felt the presence of a great and living cause, of a mighty and eternal truth; and as a consequence he exercised an influence greatly out of proportion to his personal position. It was not the man himself, it was the divine cause, it was the heaven-sent revelation which he represented, which won, which enchained to him the hearts of those who still believed in it. Elisha bent before the truth of which his master was himself the servant.

II. The first condition of a deep religious influence, proceeding whether from individuals or from churches, is a clear, positive creed, clear and positive whether it be large or small. A man must know, at least, what he does believe. Elijah would have been altogether powerless, had he only insisted on the falsehoods and superstitions of Jezebel and her prophets. He would have been powerless had he merely surrounded the revelation of Sinai with a garniture of the finest sentiment and poetry, leaving it doubtful whether he himself believed it to be God's truth or not. He was powerful because men knew that he had no sort of doubt about his creed, about its exact frontier, about its absolute certainty; and Elisha felt the passage, not of a mere man, but of a mighty cause or truth represented in the man, and he obeyed it.

But then, secondly, in representing a great cause, a mere official representation is not enough. For religious influence personal qualities are wanted, qualities in harmony with the requirements of the cause or truth represented. Eli and his sons represented the Mosaic revelation to Israel in their day, but they only made the Lord's people to transgress. Alexander the Sixth, and Leo the Tenth, represented in an official sense of the term to Western Christendom, but they certainly did not recommend it to the consciences of men. The ordinary Hanoverian bishops of a century ago were by their office representatives of Christianity in the Church of England, but, with a few splendid exceptions, their representation, too, was strictly heartless, official, and powerless where it was not, as in Hoadley's case, utterly repulsive. In order to reach human hearts and mould the affections, some sort of personal conformity to the ideal represented is needed, as well as the official right to represent. And Elijah would

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have been felt by Elisha to have this personal title to represent this cause of God superadded to the official one. Every Israelite, we may be assured, whether friend or foe, whether in open league with the apostate court of Jezebel, or in secret correspondence with the scattered schools of the prophets, every Israelite had heard of the stern mien and lofty proportions of a character which seemed to its contemplators to belong to another world. They knew that if anywhere, here was a perfect simplicity of purpose; here was a determination to live and to die for the sake of the God of the Patriarchs who had brought Israel out of Egypt, who had spoken from Sinai. They knew that here was an unflinching courage which shrunk not from encounter with the cruel, the wily idolatress who ruled the policy of Israel. They must have been well aware that the ties of flesh and blood did not fetter the great prophet's liberty; for, like John the Baptist, nine centuries later, he had prepared for his ministry in the solitude of the desert; and he then had suddenly appeared in the very palace of the weak and apostate monarch, to denounce his sin, and foretell the judgment which awaited him. In an age of decaying faith, in an age of progressive moral deterioration, in an age of general apostasy, Elijah stood forth from the mass of men in almost solitary grandeur. He must have been felt to be the typical saint and hero of the old theocracy; he must have been recognised as embodying in the highest degree the moral power which belonged to a life so shaped and so led as to express before men's eyes his strong and firm conviction of the Sinaitic revelation. True it was, as we have heard in this afternoon's lesson, that Elijah too was at times subject even to the deepest sense of discouragement. When, after his great victory over the assembled prophets of Baal upon Carmel, it seemed for a moment as if the tide of public feeling in Israel had really turned, men cried in their enthusiasm, 'The Lord, He is the God! the Lord, He is the God!' but the triumphant change was but of short duration. The day of Carmel was soon forgotten; Ahab was still Ahab, and Jezebel had not ceased to be Jezebel; and the multitude which, for a moment, had obeyed with fervour the authority of the prophet, soon fell back into the practice of the ensnaring and voluptuous rites of the Phœnician god with a new enthusiasm.

And then Elijah felt that despondency of which great and ardent souls alone are capable. God seemed to be hiding His face; the prophet's faith was almost slipping from him, the whole order of the moral world was, in his eyes, for the moment confused, dark, incomprehensible, out of course. Jezebel was again in power. She was menacing his life, and he, in truth, is weary of his life, weary of the apparently hopeless struggle in which he is engaged, and he returns

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to the southern desert in which he had learned his earliest lessons, where he is well out of the way of the levity, of the frivolity of his apostate countrymen; where he is face to face with the savage desolation of nature in a scene that seems to correspond to the blank of his own inward misery. He longed to die; and when a voice from above reaches his conscience in his retreat, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' he can only reply by a bitter complaint that God has abandoned His cause, that He has left His prophet to struggle undefended, alone, vanquished. Does this forfeit the prophet's influence? Is it fatal to the commanding, to the unique greatness of his character? Certainly, we must admit it would have been a more perfect course to have trusted God throughout, to have trusted Him in failure, not less than amid success; but Elijah, great as he was, was not the all-perfect; and his failure was itself one of those forms of failure which are only possible to faith and devotion. They to whom life seems worthless because God's cause, not theirs, but God's, is imperilled or defeated for the time, are, in all generations among the few. To the many, the whole question is of no great concern. Whether the Church of Christ is winning her way among human souls, or losing it; whether she is extending the frontiers of the Redeemer's kingdom, or barely maintaining them; whether her ministers are speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, or are pandering weakly to the popular unbelief, all this troubles them not. They eat, they drink, they walk, they sleep as if all were well, just as did their fathers in the olden days before them. The anguish, the discontent, the fierce desperation of Elijah are the products—it may be they are the unregulated and diseased products—but they are the products of a noble passion, whereof the many know nothing; it is the noble, the generous passion which is careful only for the honour of God, which is uncontrollable when He seems to be defeated or dishonoured. No! If Elisha did know of Elijah's retreat in profound discouragement, almost in despair, to the rocks of Horeb, he would not have been, I dare say it, less open to the great prophet's influence. The poignant despondency of a great faith is almost its virtue. Elisha would have felt not the less drawn to the solitary at Horeb than to the conqueror at Carmel.

III. There is a third element of influence yet, beyond: the influence which belongs to a soul often in communion with God. This is less easy to seize, to describe, or to measure, than the weight which belongs either to the representation of a great cause, or truth, or to personal elevation of character. This cannot be mapped out in words or in actions. It is nothing exactly tangible; it is an atmosphere which hovers around a life, and which we are conscious of breathing, but that is all. When we approach it, it is not a matter

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of manner or gesture, of expressive words and studied silence. It is not to be resolved into any outward form; it is too volatile, if you like, it is too strictly super-sensuous, it is too altogether appertaining to the region of spirit, to be registered by any definite tests and marks in the sphere of matter. Yet who has not sometimes felt this indescribable influence, this sure certificate of nearness to God, which the few privileged souls of both sexes in all stations of society, unconsciously to themselves, but most surely exert? It is something beyond character: it is tone. It is a something beyond goodness: it is holiness. It needs no language to express it: it is felt instinctively. Elisha may well have felt it—as we read the narrative we know it—as Elijah passed along the field of Abel-meholah.

And this history suggests two sets of considerations, one for those who exert religious influence, the other for those who yield to it.

And, first, for those who exert it. All wise and thoughtful people may well shrink from the great but unavoidable responsibility of doing so; the responsibility of saying, whether in words or by acts, to others it little matters, 'Follow me! Follow me upwards through this path in the light of this or that creed, towards the Throne of Light.' Many men profess altogether to decline any such responsibility, and yet it is certain, that do what we will, we cannot, any one of us, but exert some religious influence. Every man is assuredly the Apostle of something, of evil if not of good. Our very presence is of itself the propagation of some faith. Whether we will or not, we are leading men: we are leading those around us in some direction.

'We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more;
But, for a thousand years
Their fruit appears
In weeds that mar the land,
Or healthful store.

The deeds we do, the words we say,
Into still air they seem to fleet,
We count them ever past,
But they shall last
In the dread Judgment Day;
And we shall meet.'

It is better, then, to make a virtue of what is already a necessity, to wield and exert usefully a talent of which we cannot dispossess ourselves altogether, if we would. Some of us are teachers: what is the influence we are exerting on our pupils? Many of us are masters or mistresses: what is the influence we are bringing to bear upon our servants? Others are parents. How are you influencing, in some

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important way you must be influencing, the future of your children? Ah! but you say, 'We wish we could be of use in this way, but then it is an affair of temperament; some people seem to understand it, others do not; and we are among the number.' No, the explanation is simpler, it is more just than this. If when Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha, the mantle of his creed, of his conduct, of his life, Elisha does not respond, there may be another explanation of the failure than that which you are thinking of. Success is impossible, if Elijah represents nothing clear and certain. If he does not know his own mind, if he is only trying to win converts to a few private guesses or crotchets of his own, instead of for a creed which has come from heaven. Success is improbable, again, if Elijah's life is quite out of keeping with his creed, if he is felt to be incapable of that which he recommends, if he has done and ventured nothing for the cause he advocates. It is improbable, too, if he has nothing about him of the air and bearing of an envoy of God, if he is obviously devoted to this world, and only alludes to the next in an official or formal way, and without the accent of a man to whom it is a serious reality. Doubtless God may make His truth do its own work, through His grace in human hearts, in spite of the inconsistencies of its representatives. But then I am speaking of what is probable, and, as a rule, God works through instruments. As a rule Elisha is won by the decision, by the consistency of the unworldliness of Elijah as much as by the apparent intrinsic claims of that which he represents.

And, lastly, there is instruction here for those who yield to religious influence. Some of us, I suppose at least, have known in life something like the passage of an Elijah in our past lives. A religious influence has swept across our path, placing truth, placing duty more clearly before us than we ever knew them before, recommending them by an example of high-minded devotion, of simple, of disinterested life. We have felt its power; have we obeyed it? It may be after a legitimate, a wise hesitation such as was Elisha's, but still, have we obeyed it? Had Elisha refused to acknowledge what was meant by the casting of Elijah's mantle, who can know how vast would have been the difference to the kingdom of Israel, to the kingdom of Judah, to the kingdom of Syria, to the kingdom of God in each, and to himself above all? He was no longer in the same moral position after the divine call had reached him; he could no longer survey, if he would, his twelve yoke of oxen with a perfectly easy conscience as if he had really no duty, no destiny, excepting that of ploughing the field in Abel-meholah. A spell from heaven had crossed his path, and he must decide, either deliberately to acknowledge, or deliberately to ignore it. So it may be, or has been with

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us. The history of this afternoon's lesson will have recalled to those of us who know our Bible, at least two passages in the life of our blessed Redeemer, the call of the disciples, and the call of the man who wished first to bury his father. In our Lord's case it is observable that the call to instant obedience is much more peremptory than in Elijah's. He commands in terms: 'Follow Me.' Elijah only suggests by a symbolical action. Our Lord will allow of no delay even to perform the last duties to a parent's memory. Elijah has no hesitation in allowing Elisha to take leave of his father and mother before entering on the prophetic life. The difference is to be explained by the intrinsic difference between the person of the prophet and the person of the Redeemer. Elijah did but represent the cause of God. In Jesus, as His Apostle said, there dwelt 'the whole fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Elijah's conduct, although that of a saint and hero, was not absolutely perfect. In the life of Jesus, no trace of shortcoming could possibly be detected by the most cynical criticism. They who came near to Elijah came near to one who was irradiated by constant communion with God; they who came near to Jesus, were as the seraphim and cherubim round the throne, whether they knew it or not, close to the very form which the All Holy had assumed on earth. The greater urgency of our Lord is proportioned to His unspeakably higher and more imperative claim. And it is with Him, and not with His prophets, not with any of His instruments or agents, that we have to do. Amid our most trivial duties in this life, on days which are passing by us in the usual round of uneventful routine, He may speak to us as never before. A quiet word may be dropped by a friend, a sentence read in a book, a thought lodged we know not why, or how, in the mind, and we are laid under obligations to a new and more imperious view of life and duty. Not Elijah, but Elijah's Lord has passed and cast His mantle on us.

There is, of course, abundant room for self-delusion of many kinds in the supposed visit of a heavenly call. We may read our fancies in the skies. If we do not take care we may transfigure our own wishes into a divine voice by a process so subtle as to impose upon ourselves. But we are tolerably safe if two conditions are observed. If, first, the duty or line of life prescribed is unwelcome to our natural inclinations; and if, secondly, it does not contradict what we know God has taught us hitherto, if it is an extension of His earlier teaching, not its condemnation. No one who believes that our Lord Jesus Christ is present by His Spirit in His Church can doubt that He will, from time to time, speak thus to souls in virtue of His own promises. No one who knows anything practically of the lives of earnest Christians will question the fact of His having

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done so. And to listen for the footsteps of the Divine Redeemer passing by us in the ordinary conditions of life is a most important part of the probation of every man. How much may depend on following when He beckons us to some higher duty, to some more perfect service, we shall only know when we see all things as they really are, in the light of His Eternity. H. P. LIDDON.

The Still Small Voice.

And after the fire, a still small voice. 1 KINGS xix. 12.

I. **A**S, creeping out of his hiding-place, Elijah stands in the murky darkness, a strange event suddenly breaks the awful silence. A storm bursts forth as if maddened by long imprisonment under the everlasting hills, careering, plunging, thundering, it leaps down the mountain side. 'A great and strong wind rent the mountain, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord.' Elijah is awed at the magnificence of God, but Elijah is comfortless. The Lord was not in the wind. Then the solid mountain begins to vibrate beneath his feet, the ground to undulate, and chasms to yawn; it is an earthquake. But when the shock is over, it leaves Elijah, as before, in cold, comfortless silence. The Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a mighty fire leaps forth, lighting up the dark cliffs, as though the very heavens were on fire over head, swooping past with crackling roar; but when it is gone he is left in the same cold gloominess of spirit. The Lord was not in the fire. 'And after the fire, a still small voice'; a divine afflatus whispering peace and shedding tranquillity over that chafed and troubled spirit, like the Gospel, the gentle voice of grace and love and mercy, of peace and pardon and salvation by Christ. The Lord was in this still small voice, even by the power of His Spirit. This is evident by the effect it had on Elijah, it melts his heart. It speaks in soft accents of kindness to his soul, and it tells him that while God is a God of judgment He is also a God of mercy.

And our Church commemorates the coming down of God to His crushed and comfortless disciples on the day of Pentecost, not in the storm or earthquake or fire but when the darkness of Calvary was past, and the rending of the rocks was over, and the cloven tongues as of fire had dispersed, in that which remained, and still abides, for the Church in all ages of this Gospel dispensation, the still small voice of the Holy Spirit coming down into our hearts, and resting upon us. And there is not one of

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us to whom God has not spoken, is not speaking, in this still small voice.

II. This voice, then, speaking to us in the Word of God, in preaching, brings us all, not into personal, but into spiritual contact with God. True, we are at all times surrounded with His presence. There is no hiding-place in the wide universe which is not penetrated by His eye, and covered by His hand. 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.' We do not feel this as we ought. But if our sensibilities be not utterly blunted, and our conscience seared, there are seasons when we must solemnly feel that God is in contact with us. In times of sickness, when our couch is watered with tears, when the strong man is bowed down, and 'brought into the dust of death'; in seasons of bereavement, when God darkens the clear sky, and death comes in at our window; in the time of pestilence, when the Angel of Death flaps his sable wing over the city, and the mourners go about the streets; in the time of famine, when the 'seven ears are withered, thin and blasted'; and when Want, like a grim spectre, stalks over the land; when War, with his bloody heel, treads down slaughtered men, and the widow's wail mingles with the orphan's cry, who does not at these times tremble with silent awe before the Divine Majesty of God! Yet not in any one, nor in all of these, does God come so nigh as when, by the still small voice of His Holy Spirit, He speaks to the soul. In all these other instances, however near God may be, still He is without us. But by His Spirit He is within us. He breathes into the very chambers of the heart. He lays His hand upon our very thoughts. He turns the current of our affections into new channels, and makes the heart to beat with the pulse of a new life. He comes to 'convince us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,' to reveal the heart to itself in all its sinfulness, and to reveal that Saviour on whom He commands us to believe. Not, indeed, to call up a man's past sins like ghosts to haunt him, not to throw the heart back upon itself, that it may be lashed into frenzy, and driven to despair, but to lead it up in trustful faith to that Saviour who, in the still small voice of His Spirit, breathes pardon and peace and blessing and comfort into every contrite heart and broken spirit.

Every command of God's binds the present moment, and every offer of the Gospel is made in the present hour. 'Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.' He who uses up his morrows in fruitless resolutions of amendment is like the spend-

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thrift who anticipates his income, and overwhelms his future fortune with the debts of the past.

CANON FLEMING.

Elijah's Character.

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?
1 KINGS xix. 9.

WHEN Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appeared upon earth to give by His works and by His words the final revelation of the will of God, there arrived a crisis in His life when, to confirm the minds of His perplexed followers, there was vouchsafed a supernatural declaration that He was superior to all prophets and teachers, who before Him had been bearers of the divine message. On that memorable occasion the two representatives of the earlier dispensations, who confessed by their presence that a greater than themselves had come amongst men, were Moses and Elijah; Moses the mediator of that law which for many centuries had been the symbol and bond of the national existence of the chosen people of God; and Elijah, who might well be accounted the greatest of the prophets. For, truly, out of all 'the goodly fellowship of the Prophets,' who were from age to age the living witnesses for a righteous God ruling amongst men, and the bold preachers of righteousness alike to kings, and priests, and people, none shine forth with greater lustre in the pages of the Old Testament history than Elijah the Tishbite. In whose character shall we find more heroic intrepidity, more energetic zeal in God's service, more patient endurance of suffering for the truth's sake, more unflinching steadfastness in bearing testimony to the majesty of right and justice? We behold in him a man who, with an utter scorn of his own personal interests, is not afraid to brave unpopularity, and, a stranger to flattery, utter unpalatable truths in high places. In his startling appearances and disappearances, in his ubiquitousness in wholly unexpected times and places, he reminds us of the stories told of a later prophet of the Christian Church, Athanasius the Great. Hear Elijah as he denounces to the guilty monarch of Israel the impending drought of three years: gaze on him as, bearing his solitary witness for Jehovah, he contends with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel: follow him, as in the very vineyard acquired by murderous covetousness he proclaims to Jezebel, the real mistress of the government, the ignominious death which awaited her, and you will form some faint image of one of the true heroes of the world. Here, if ever, was one who never feared the face of man.

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Great, however, as Elijah was, pre-eminent as he was among those who have fought in that world-enduring strife between good and evil, there was an occasion in his life when even his brave heart quailed for a time under the dangers which assailed him, and when the courage of the zealous servant of God was almost overpowered. When Jezebel, the imperious Sidonian princess, who had instigated her husband Ahab to introduce amongst his subjects the false worship of Baal, in which she had been nurtured, heard of the disastrous issue of the great contest on Carmel, and the utter destruction by the sword of the idolatrous priests of whom she accounted herself the special patroness, she vowed vengeance on the head of Elijah. She lost no time in sending a message to him whom she naturally considered her chief enemy. 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.' It would be wrong to say that Elijah was terrified by the threat and therefore took to flight. He counted not his life dear to him: he was quite willing, as he shortly showed, to die. It is truer to say that he was dejected and disappointed. His courage and perseverance were sorely tried. All seemed adverse to him. The whole weight of the royal court was exerted to effect his extermination. His countrymen seemed to have no sympathy with him. They followed the fashion of those in power, and with a lax indifference consented to the idolatry which they knew to be sinful, even though it had so recently been manifested to be false and powerless. Elijah was almost tempted to think that God had forsaken him. Success had not crowned his efforts. He was alone against the world. Why should he any longer carry on the weary unprosperous contest? So he retired to Beersheba, out of the land of Israel, which had been the appointed sphere of his mission, into the southernmost town of the land of Judah, on the confines of the wilderness. He may have thought that his retreat here would soon be discovered, and Ahab and Jezebel would send messengers to Jehoshaphat the king demanding his surrender; or it may be permitted us to think that he desired to commit his soul to the Lord his God in solitary communion to learn what was His will concerning him. So leaving his servant behind him, utterly unattended, he went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree, requesting for himself that he might die, and saying, 'It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.'

I. Is not this narrative of the sacred history a true natural delineation of human character? Does it not portray with life-like exactness the very inward reasonings of a brave heart struggling with despair and for the moment overcome? Very tender and loving was

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the dealing of the Lord of the prophet with His servant. He did not upbraid him with a desertion of duty, still less did he grant his immediate request. He knew the heart of His servant and came to his succour. As the wearied man, all exhausted with his hasty flight, lay sleeping under the shelter of the juniper-tree (the broom, as travellers tell us, which in that region affords protection by night from the wind and by day from the sun), a ministering spirit was sent on an errand of mercy. An angel touched him, and bid him arise and eat, and when he looked, beheld provided for his sustenance a cake and a cruse of water. So strengthened yet once and again he went forth a journey of forty days and forty nights to Horeb the Mount of God, as if expecting to receive there, where God of old had revealed Himself to Moses, a special voice from heaven. There he sheltered himself in a cave, not knowing what awaited him. In that secret resting-place, far away from the haunts of men, in the awful solitude of the desert, where man seems to hold converse only with his Maker, the word of the Lord came to the prophet, and a voice was heard crying in clear accents, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' Why here, so far away from the land of Israel? Why here, where there are no kings, no priests, no multitudes to hear the words which I have put in thy mouth? Why here, where I have not sent thee? The prophet's answer was the ready expression of the feelings uppermost in his mind. 'I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.' The answer is the answer of disappointment and failing hope; it is the sorrowful confession of defeat and of the futility of prolonging an unequal struggle. The prophet was bidden to go and await the divine reply, abiding yet in the mount. And that reply, which had a parabolic meaning to the hearing ear of spiritual receptiveness, came not in the great and strong wind, nor yet in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but (to use the words of the marginal note of the R. V.) 'in a sound of gentle stillness' echoing those former words, What doest thou here, Elijah? Again did the prophet answer in the same desponding language expressive of unrequited labour and blighted hopes. The world was against him, he could avail nothing, he had come, if God so willed, to die. The divine answer implied at once rebuke and encouragement. It said in effect, Not here in inaction and solitude is thy place, not in caves and deserts is thy mission for Me. Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus, up to thine ancient sphere of action; among the great ones of the earth thou hast yet to work for Me. It is thine to designate new kings for Syria and for Israel, and to call to

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My service another who, when thou hast fulfilled thy allotted term of work, shall fulfil the prophet's office in thy stead. Nor art thou so utterly friendless as thou supposest. Yet are there left, or it may be, yet will I have, seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to the idol-god. Be not afraid; I am with thee. Go, return, linger not here: thy work is not yet done, thy race is not run; thou hast yet to bear witness for Me in many a day of trial. Elijah was not disobedient to the heavenly calling. He did as he was bidden. He lived years after this event to denounce judgment against the king and queen for their foul unrighteousness in the matter of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite; to behold the fulfilment of his prophecy of divine retribution when the dogs licked the blood of Ahab in the pool of Samaria, after he had been slain in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead; to call down fire from heaven on the messengers of Ahaziah, the worthless successor of his father Ahab. He lived on till, finally, in the full glory of a triumph he was carried away from earth in 'a storm accompanied by a fiery phenomenon, which appeared to the eyes of Elisha as a chariot of fire and horses of fire in which his master rode to heaven.'

II. The voice which came to Elijah in the cave of Horeb has not lost its note of mingled warning and encouragement. It is recorded for our instruction: its echoes may be heard, if we will only listen, in the still small voice of conscience. It conveys a message suitable for all times. 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' Surely such words come as a loud call to action, to fresh effort, to comparison of our duties and our performances. They encourage us not to despond, nor shrink from appointed work in the great system of human relations of which we form a part. It is easy for us to imagine a condition of circumstances almost exactly analogous to those of Elijah. We may picture to ourselves the case of a man who has become the advocate of some great and noble cause. He may have within him a strong conviction that he has, under the guiding hand of Providence, been raised up for this very purpose. It may be his duty to assert some forgotten principle of justice, or to vindicate the rights of some oppressed class, or to proclaim some neglected doctrines of the faith once delivered to the saints. In carrying out the work assigned him, it may be his fortune to encounter unnumbered difficulties. He may have to endure unpopularity by offending recognised maxims and modes of action, by violating deep-seated prejudices, by exposing the hollowness of hypocrisy, by inveighing against the wickedness of those in whose hands power, and rank, and influence are lodged, and he may seem to himself singlehanded in the fight. The sympathy of friends may be cold and infrequent, opponents may rise up on every side - scorn, and ridicule, and contempt may be his

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portion; his equals or inferiors may outstrip him in the race for worldly advancement. The man may faint under the weight of opposition and apparent failure. He may be ready to abandon the thankless enterprise. He may be tempted to say with Elijah, Let me die, for I am not better than my fathers. And so his energies may relax, his courage may yield to the pressure of danger, he may withdraw himself from the busy scene of active life, and retire as it were into the wilderness. Oh, well for him, if in such an hour of despondency there fall upon his ear the voice which asks, What doest thou here? For what does it mean? Art thou sure of the goodness and righteousness of thy cause? dost thou believe it to be committed to thee as a call from God? Then be not weary of well-doing. What doest thou here in despair, in inactivity, in unavailing complaints? Not here, but in the thick of the battle is thy place, where thou must strive for the truth, if need be, unto death. Leave to God the issue of events, it is thy duty to do His will unto the end. Often, alike in the study of history, and in the experience of our own daily life, do we all need to be reminded that success is not the measure of truth. It was a divine speaker who denounced woe upon us when all men speak well of us. Not by popularity, not by immediate outward triumph, not by the rapid prevalence of truth and right will the true servant of God look to be upheld, but by the assurance that God will in the ultimate working out of His providential government make the cause of truth and justice, which is His own cause, to prevail, if we manfully fulfil our allotted task in forwarding it. We may not always expect to see the prosperity of our own handiwork, it may be reserved for our children and successors to see God's glory openly vindicated. It will be enough for us to find comfort in such a consolatory message as came to a prophet later than Elijah: 'Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' Does not history tell us of many a hero in the spiritual world who has had to die in order that the fruit of his labours may appear? Many a man who in his lifetime was hated, and scorned, and persecuted, has become in after generations a household word for greatness, and nobleness, and self-devotion to the service of God. Tell over in memory the glorious catalogue of martyrs, and confessors, and reformers, and philanthropists, and you will see that they have vanquished the world by opposing it. Why should they who have God and the right on their side be afraid of the power of men? Strong in the might of God's approval and the advocacy of a righteous cause, they may remain dauntless when all seems against them. In moments of hesitation and meditated withdrawal, they will not shut their ears to a voice which calls to them, as it did to Elijah, Go, return on thy way, fulfil thy mission. And

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they may find comfort in the thought that their labour is not always so fruitless in their own day as they imagine. Elijah thought that he was the only worshipper of the true God left in Israel; but he was told that there were yet seven thousand who remained as an elect company of faithful souls, who may have been upheld by his own steadfastness and sturdy protests against idolatry. In like manner we are warranted by experience in believing that many a Christian prophet and teacher who fears that his toil has had little reward, and laments over heedless listeners and hearts apparently unsubdued to the obedience of the faith, will find in after years, perhaps amongst widely different scenes, that all unknown to him the seed has sprung up and taken root in many a heart: he may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. He may well be content to sow in tears, and hereafter reap in joy.

W. INCE.

The Dry Brook.

And it came to pass, after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. I KINGS xvii. 9.

THIS is a part of the story of the education of Elijah. Elijah had come over out of Gilead upon an errand from the Lord God Almighty. The people of Israel had fallen into base idolatry. They had made a spiritual rebellion. They had dethroned God. And Elijah came to bring them back into allegiance. 'And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.' That was Elijah's message. That was the beginning of his mission. And when he had said that, when he had brought that word from the living God to the rebellious king, he went away and hid himself beside this brook. And then God began to make him ready for the next part of his great work. God went on educating Elijah.

All the land over, God was teaching terrible lessons out of the dry brooks. Everybody was in Elijah's class. Day after day, till the weeks grew into months, the sky glowed like a furnace, and the earth was parched into hot dust, and all the green things in the fields withered, and all living creatures went athirst and hungry. There was one word in every heart, and that word was 'famine.' Everything else was forgotten. Everybody prayed for rain.

The first thing, if you are to teach anybody, is to get attention. Even God must have attention. And sometimes it takes a strange sight, indeed sometimes it takes a tragedy or a famine, to get men to look in God's direction, and to listen to His voice. It did here.

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These people were wholly given over to the secular side of life. They were all the time looking down, and never up. We read about the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, and about temples and groves of Baal and Ashtaroth at Samaria and Jezreel, and all that old life seems far away, and foreign, and obsolete, and altogether out of relation with the life we live to-day. But human nature does not greatly change. Names change, but the facts which lie behind them continue. Languages, customs, skies change; the centre of the world moves from one land to another; outwardly there is absolute revolution, everything is different: Dan and Bethel, Samaria and Jezreel, fall into ruins, and New York and Philadelphia, Pittsburg and Chicago, take their places; and Baal and Ashtaroth are dead. But men and women meet the same temptations still and fall into the same sins. The devil wears a different dress; that is about the only difference.

I. This is one of the benedictions of disaster: that it sets us face to face with the realities of life. We come into an irresistible recognition of the fact that there is something more valuable than money, and more precious than pleasure. Day by day we are busy doing our day's work, occupied with the small interests which crowd our time, set upon transitory purposes, taken up with matters of the moment. And these things seem the only realities there are. God is out of sight and out of mind. Heaven and hell are theological expressions. Prayer is of no practical value. But we can put our hand on the round face of the dollar. We can be absolutely sure of the existence of a dollar. That, anyhow, is real.

And then comes trouble. And what a change that makes! What a reversal of all our valuations! Can money help us? Can society console us? O Baal, hear us! But there is no voice, nor any that answers. Baal is silent; Ashtaroth is silent. And here is the drought and the famine, and the brook is dried up because there is no rain in the land. Then we begin to think. And we remember God. And we change the emphasis of our life, and put it in a better place. And the dry brook teaches the lesson which it taught in Ahab's day, the lesson of the supremacy of God, the lesson of the infinite seriousness of life.

II. But Elijah knew that lesson. There was no need to teach that to Elijah. Let the other brooks dry up; but this brook Cherith at Elijah's feet, surely God will keep that full of water. Morning and evening come the ravens, bringing breakfast and supper to the hungry prophet, and he drinks the water of the brook. God is taking care of Elijah. The hot sun glares out of the sky, but the deep valley is in the shadow. The famine tightens its hold upon the starving people, but Elijah neither thirsts nor hungers. And he paces up and down

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in his solitary valley, safe and satisfied, and rejoices, like Jonah, to imagine the fearful execution of the sentence of the indignant God.

But by and by the heat begins to creep down into the pleasant valley; little by little the water in the brook grows less. The days pass; the anxious prophet watches; at last, 'after a while,' the brook dries up. And the drought touches Elijah.

Now here is one of the hardest things to understand in the hard problem of pain. I mean this strange impartiality. If the brook had dried up in front of Ahab's palace, that would have been right. We could see plainly enough what that was for. But when the brook dries up at the feet of the only good man in the whole country, that is quite a different matter. 'There was no rain in the land,' and that affected Elijah's brook just as it affected Ahab's. Sometimes there is a pestilence in the land, and the saint suffers like the sinner. All the time there is trouble in the land, of one sort or another, and the trouble touches the good just as it touches the bad. There is no difference. And we wonder why. No doubt but Elijah, standing on the bank of the dry brook, wondered why.

We can see why in Elijah's case. The dry brook taught Elijah the lesson of fellowship.

There he sat apart in his pleasant valley, and all the world about him was full of trouble. It is not likely that he greatly cared. He was a stern man, a preacher of the indignation of an offended God. It may even have given him a certain fierce joy to think of all that misery. These people had sinned, and now they were getting properly punished; and Elijah was glad of it. And he needed to be taught better than that. And so the dry brook brought him, first of all, out of his satisfied seclusion. He had to leave that pleasant valley.

Out goes Elijah into the suffering world. Hungry and thirsty he takes his journey across the country. He knows now what starvation means. A great pity begins to take possession of his heart. He thinks now about that great famine in quite another way, and wants it ended. And presently he is standing on the top of Carmel, and looking up into the hot sky, and praying God for rain.

It is essential that whoever would be a helper of men must first have fellowship with men. He must go out among them and know them. He cannot stay apart in any pleasant seclusion, having no experience of the hunger and thirst which devour the life of man; he must himself bear our sicknesses and carry our sorrows. We must first love him before he can be of help to us. And we can love him only when he first loves us. Christ stands supreme in our affection because He came out among us, and touched our hands with His

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hands, and did not in any way hold Himself aloof even from sinners. And because He was tempted, He became our helper in temptation. Because He suffered with us He becomes our Saviour.

The brook dries up, and we begin to understand what other people suffer. And so we begin to be able to help them. There is that blessing in pain and trouble, anyhow, that it gives sympathy, and fellowship, and understanding. It sends us out of the pleasant valley into the world where God needs us for His work.

The dry brook taught Ahab the existence of God ; but it taught Elijah the existence of man.

GEORGE HODGES.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Our Power to Help or Harm Religion.

Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. S. MATTHEW xxiii. 13.



WE cannot get the full force of these words of Jesus unless we remember that they were spoken to those who called themselves, and who in some true sense were, religious men. He was speaking to the Pharisees. And the Pharisees were the distinctly and peculiarly religious people of Jerusalem. When Jesus came then to Jerusalem, and through that great religious city wanted to make His entrance into the life of the world, it was not strange that He gave the Pharisees, as the religious people of the religious city, the chance to be the door by which His entrance might be made. And when they failed Him, when with their bigotry, and narrowness, and pride they shut Him out and persecuted Him, it was not strange that He rebuked them with especial indignation. They were hindering His work, not merely as any man might have hindered it, but also in a special way in which none but religious men, none but recognised religious leaders, could have hindered it. They were shutting Him out not merely as any part of the wall might shut a man out, by mere passive obstinacy and hardness, but as only a door can shut a man out, by a bolt deliberately drawn across the leaves. On the other hand, because they were the religious door, He had a right to expect an admission through them which He could not expect at any other point of the long wall. Therefore it was that a peculiar dis-

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appointment and a more passionate rebuke was in the words of Jesus when He upbraided the Pharisees than when He lamented the general hardness of the people's heart. It was His sorrow and indignation over that hindrance which none except religious people had it in their power to put in the way of His work.

The words of Christ suggest one truth which evidently lies at the root of the whole subject, which is that every hindrance which any Christian puts in the way of other men's becoming Christians is associated with an imperfection in his own Christian life. Jesus says to the Pharisees, 'Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' We are sometimes haunted and distressed by the thought of men thoroughly and purely Christians who yet by some mere accident of their character throw obstacles in the way of their fellow-men. 'A man may be everything that he ought to be,' we say, 'his life may be as bright and straight as a sunbeam, and yet in this twisted world he will do harm. An angel himself walking our streets would meet some men so perverse that the sight of his glory would turn them away from the angelic life.' There is some truth in that, no doubt, but far less than we are apt to suppose. Indeed, there is so little truth in it, I think, that we may practically disregard it. He would be safe enough, I think, who, with the power to live a perfect life, should go upon his way, living that life without dreading or even guarding against the misconceptions that men might form about him, and the mischief that he might do. The perfect life must bear ultimately witness of itself, and correct unconsciously the mischief which it unconsciously may do. But, at any rate, it is of imperfect lives that Christ is speaking to the Pharisees, and their imperfection and the mischief which they do belong together. It is the men who go not in themselves to the kingdom of God who hinder the other men who are entering from going in. And so when we set ourselves to study, as I want to do to-day, the reasons why our Christianity does not make Christians all around us, it is to the imperfection of our own Christianity that we must look. No doubt you and I might be shining and spotless in our faith, and yet men would stand around us unmoved and unconvinced. They would keep still their free power of choice. But now we are not shining, we are not spotless. We not merely fail to win our brethren to our faith, we put obstacles in their way, and make it harder for them to be Christians, and we do this because our own Christianity is poor. Let us try in all earnestness to see what some of the faults and reasons of its failures are.

I. I mention, then, first the look of unreasonableness which much of the way in which Christians deal with Christianity gives to their faith in the eyes of their fellow-men. Often it is done with the very

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best intention, often it is a mere effort to preserve the sacredness, the dignity, the awfulness of our religion; but I am sure that many of you will recognise the thing I mean when I say that the Christian faith is made by many Christians to seem fantastic and unreasonable, something wholly distinct and apart from, and even contradictory to, the ordinary laws of thought and life, something that cannot be understood except by a special initiation and the use of wholly different faculties besides those which men use on other things. I think the surprise of many a simple earnest soul, when at last it finds its way to Christ, is at the wonderful openness of that path which men have somehow made to seem so difficult and shut. Many a teacher who has deliberately and elaborately made the Christian faith unreasonable, has found for the first time how sweetly simple and reasonable it was, as he has seen the child or disciple whom he was trying to train in all his own poor subtleties, some day, with a revelation direct from God, drawn past him and all that he was trying to elaborate, into the heart of Christ, where it had been simply shown to him that he belonged.

II. The next defect in a religion which hinders other men from being religious, is the lack of connection that there often is between our faith and the facts, the evident facts and duties, of our daily life. The facts and duties of life are hard but precious tests of the unseen life of character which lies behind them. No man but the captain of the ship can know what the captain is doing as he sits in his still cabin and studies out his course, but every passenger knows it when the misguided ship strikes upon the rocks. Men find their entrance into ideas mainly through the gateway of the conduct of the men who hold those ideas already. The only way by which it is possible that your eyesight should climb to the star in the sky, is up the ladder of the starlight which the star shines down to you. Let there seem to be starlight, and your eye will find a star where all is vacancy. Let the stream of starlight be broken, and the brightest star will burn unseen. The anger of the Christian father, the frivolousness of the Christian mother, the selfishness of the Christian brother or sister, the fraud of the Christian merchant, the uncleanness of the man who is the disciple of the pure Christ, these are great blocks laid right across the path of children and of childlike souls that are coming to Christ. It is a terrible responsibility. Evidently it is a responsibility which cannot be met save as we ourselves 'go in' to that deepest region of the Christian consecration where faith and life perfectly correspond.

III. I mention next the lack of sympathy with the life and activity of men into which some Christians seem to be thrown by their Christian faith. It is an old charge, and it is not so largely true as the

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men who have constantly made it would have us think. But still there is truth in it, of which the men who are trying to be Christians, and to make other men Christians, ought to take heed. There is an essential defect in every Christian's experience of Christ which does not make him care more for the occupations of even the most secular and irreligious of his fellow-men, and strive more to get at whatever there may be good in their hearts and souls.

IV. Another of the dangers of Christians is lest they lose the essential loftiness of the Christian life, and make it seem to other men a sordid and unworthy thing. What the world needs from Christian men to-day is not renewed assurance that Christianity is easy, and economical, and safe, but a great outburst of Christian zeal which shall throw itself into the work and life of Christ, and, without asking whether it be hard or easy, whether it be safe or dangerous, shall only follow Him with true love whithersoever He goes.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

'The Mission of Elijah.

Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. MALACHI iv. 5, 6.

A STRANGE and weird figure is this of the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, suddenly projected on the page of history without a word of preliminary notice. 'He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins,' somewhat like one who, many generations after him, came with a similar mission, and almost in his name. He was an unique personage, and he had an unique mission. There had been prophets before, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Ahijah, and others, but Elijah is as of a new order; he covers a larger space; he speaks and acts with greater authority; he became a type of the man of God, speaking to men as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. John the Baptist, I have said, was one of his spiritual successors, and his greatest; Athanasius, perhaps, was another, and Martin Luther, and perhaps John Wesley; or, at least these latter have been like Elisha, catching up his mantle and being baptized with a portion of his spirit. They have been the men who have accomplished the great moral and spiritual revolutions of the world, each according to the needs of his age, and with weapon suited to the need. Rough, earnest, strong-willed men most of them; not given to mince their words or to stand upon courtesies; but they have been the men to keep alive the flame of religion to prevent its dying out.

I. The age of prophets, at least of Elijahs of the old type, has

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passed away. Yet, though no Elijah, there may be an Elisha; though not an Isaiah, yet a Malachi. 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son,' said Amos to the priest of Bethel, who forbade his prophesying any more in the court of the king. 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son. The Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' S. Paul tells us that prophecy is the highest gift bestowed by Christ upon His Church, and it is certain that all we who feel that our call is to proclaim God's truth to man may well pray to be endowed with a portion of it. 'Desire spiritual gifts,' says S. Paul, 'but rather that ye may prophesy.' Whatever spiritual gifts may have been necessary or profitable to the Church in other times, I am persuaded that the gift of prophecy is the most necessary and profitable now. 'Christ,' says the great Apostle, 'sent me not to baptize,' others with lower gifts could do that, and do it effectually. 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,' and 'I preached it,' he adds, 'not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Men have felt the power, and acknowledged the teaching. Their listening to him was the Apostle's highest credential. 'The seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord.' Just as in former generations they had felt the difference between the teaching of the Scribes and that of the Galilean Peasant—for He seemed no more in their eyes—who taught as one having authority, and of whom some said, 'Never man spake like this man,' so men felt the difference between a Paul and a Philetus, between a John and a Diotrephes. A man may well pray for a portion of this power, and for grace to use it in the noblest cause. It is not eloquence, it is not popularity, it is not the power of attracting a crowd; it is something, impalpable but most real, when men bend their wills, and hearts, and consciences before uttered truth, and feel that this is indeed 'the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.'

This afternoon, on my way back from the East of London, I walked along the Commercial Road, and through the thronged thoroughfares of Whitechapel and Aldgate. I saw humanity there in many forms, few of them lovely. There was the street trader driving his profitable trade; there were hundreds roaming to and fro without an apparent object, and who had no Sunday clothes; there was the shameless harlot—and who made that woman shameless?—there was the deadly spirit-vault, with its bar crowded with young and old men and women, asking for poison from end to end. My wife was with me, and she turned to me and said, 'Well, this is sadder than anything we have ever seen in Manchester'; and I thought, Can science or philosophy ever heal these things? Nay,

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my thought was even sadder than that; for I said to myself, 'We have let this evil grow and gain such dimensions that can even Christianity, such as we know it, and such as we have allowed it to become, **can** even Christianity heal it? Could Sodom, could Egypt, "the city in which our Lord was also crucified," have ever shown sadder, more despairing scenes than these?' I am waiting to hear what the new philosophy has to say to these social facts, and still more anxiously to hear what it means to do with them. 'Oh,' you say, with a jaunty air, 'we will clear out these rookeries. The law has been passed long ago, and if our municipalities did their duty, this state of things would have long since been mended.' But these were not rookeries. The ways were spacious. I passed several blocks of model lodging-houses; church towers, and spires, and chapel roofs could be seen rising everywhere; the spirit-vaults were of the brightest and most attractive, and yet here, in the midst of these things, was a population upon whom some remedial agencies are urgently needed to be brought to bear. Indeed, even science and philosophy are hardly safe among such surroundings. 'A republic does not need chemists,' said a French terrorist, and sent Lavoisier to the guillotine. Oh for prophets, I thought, to guide these sheep, wandering as without a shepherd; to rouse the slumbering hope; to kindle the higher motive; to put the worthier aim in and before the heart of each! For each heart, however debased, is still human, and, more than that, has been made in the very image of God. It is the prophet with his large free heart that is needed, not the sacerdotal exclusionist jealously guarding his supposed special prerogatives, a heart as large as that of Moses when he rebuked Joshua's ill-timed zeal for his honour with the memorable words, 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them.' At such a time, even if we like not their methods, we dare not rebuke or try to hinder any who are working miracles or casting out devils in Christ's name; surely they are for Christ and not against Him. Instead of finding fault with others, let us bestir ourselves; too long the Church seems as though she had been sleeping beside the crater of a volcano. If we would not have the Lord come and smite the earth with a curse, let us see whether by Christian hands and Christian hearts something cannot be done to arrest the moral devastation of society. And if we come upon the field too late, and if the enemy come on too fast and too strong, and so the battle go against us, at least let us fall with our faces towards the foe, and with the spiritual weapons of warfare in our hands. It is something even to have fought in Christ's name and for Christ's cause, and even in this nineteenth century in the noble army of martyrs yet there is room.

J. FRASER.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY

Law and Christian Morality.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

I. **F**IRST let us see what the words of the text mean. 'The law became our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.' If you will turn to the Revised Version, you will see that for the word 'schoolmaster' is substituted the word 'tutor'; but neither schoolmaster nor tutor expresses the meaning of the original Greek word of S. Paul, *παιδαγωγός*; and indeed there is no English word which does. The *παιδαγωγός* was the slave who, in ancient Athens, led boys to school, and, slave though he was, he was generally an experienced and honoured slave, and to him was intrusted the care, the discipline, the moral guardianship of the boys of the family. Now the uses of the moral law are exactly analogous to this. Our life is but the childhood of our eternity, the school-days preparatory to the immortal years beyond; and to the law, as to a ruler, stern yet beneficent, has been intrusted by God the discipline of our souls until we have been built up into Christ. When that is done, the end of life is attained; then love is an unerring light and joy its own security; then the 'Thou shalt' of the law has melted into the rapturous 'I ought, I can, I will,' of the disciplined character and of perfect love. Now, as the slave who led boys to school in ancient Greece had to be stern and watchful for the sake of the boys themselves, so too is God's law, which comes to us with the mighty sanction, 'God spake these words and said.'

II. The Ten Commandments were never meant to be taken only in the letter. Every one of them was meant to be positive as well as negative. In every Thou shalt not was included the opposite, Thou shalt. We see, again, that in each command there was an all-inclusive comprehensiveness intended to cover every cognate duty; so that, for instance, the Seventh Commandment is a prohibition of drunkenness, impurity, and every form of sensual sin, and the Sixth Commandment prohibits pride and malice, and every form of mental passion. We see thirdly from Christ's teaching, that in God's intention, the Ten Commandments were meant to 'pierce even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, sharper than any two-edged sword, and quick to discern the thoughts of every heart.' Now, these truths are involved in the actual structure of the Ten Commandments as they are, though we should never have learnt it if Christ had not taught it to us.

1. For, first observe, there is no self in them; every root of self-

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ishness is utterly excluded from them. Now to most men and women self is everything. Their whole life is a room lined with looking-glasses presenting to them in all directions, and at every glance, innumerable reflections and multiplications of their own petty and worthless selves. With boundless self-importance, as though the world was made for them, and everybody was looking at them, and everybody was thinking of them, they make themselves, their own low selves, the whole. Like the haughty and insolent lady of ancient Rome, they would welcome even a pestilence if it made more room for themselves in the crowded streets. They would sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. They would rejoice to make their fortune out of some accursed source of gain, no matter how many souls were tempted, or even ruined by it. They would break up the very universe if out of it they could make a comfortable footstool for themselves. They are their own gods, sick worshippers of dead idols, anxious only and always to fill the palsied hand which their vile self stretches out to their sated and yet insatiable desires. Now, when 'God spake these words and said,' He laid the axe at the root of this despicable selfishness. The Ten Commandments have no single word of recognition for self. They only recognise life as worship and service, and no one could be further from their fulfilment than the self-adoring Pharisee who, content to hug his own fancied plank of safety amid the welter of universal surge, had no better word for the multitudes for whom Christ died than to say that 'this people which knoweth not the law'—by which he only meant that they paid no attention to his own trumpery practices and opinions—'these people,' he said, 'are accursed.' But the Ten Commandments obliterate selfishness altogether, and regarding even temperance, soberness, and chastity, which are included in the Seventh Commandment, as part of a man's general duty to God and the world, recognise all human obligations as involved in man's love and worship of his Creator, and in man's love and service to his fellow-man.

2. And notice further, that the Ten Commandments themselves imply their own extension from the acts of the body to the thoughts of the heart, for alike the first and the last Commandment forbid nothing more or less than an evil thought. And herein this code bears conspicuous testimony to its own divine origin. Search all the codes of the nations through in every age since the world began, and not in one of them will you find a single law which forbids an evil thought, like 'Thou shalt not covet.' Why is this? Because human law only forbids that of which it takes cognisance. Human law can take no cognisance of the thoughts of the heart, but God, when He gives a law, can take such cognisance; 'naked and open to Him are the secret thoughts of your hearts'; 'He trieth the very

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reins of the heart.' The divine code therefore proves its divine origin by forbidding the crime of guilty thoughts which are to human judgment palpable.

III. If, then, the law, as God's honoured slave, has led us to Christ's school for instruction, we are now in a position to understand more clearly what those Ten Commandments mean. We shall see that, as the first table teaches us our duty towards God and the second our duty towards our neighbour, so, midway between the two, stands on the first table the solemn—and, in this age, the much neglected—law of duty to our parents and to all those in authority, because almost every sin has its root in the insolence of self-assertion; and all just rulers, whether our parents or others, wield over us a power of more than merely human sanction. We see, further, that the Commandments on the two tables advance in reverse order. The First and Second Commandments forbid sin against God in thought, the Third in word, the Fourth in deed; and on the second table the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth forbid sins against our neighbour in deed, the Ninth in word, the Tenth in thought. So that all the first table runs in the order of thoughts, words, deeds; the second table runs in the order of deeds, words, thoughts, so as to begin and end the Ten Commandments with the prohibition of evil thoughts. And why is this? It is to emphasise that awful truth which I have set before you, that men are always guilty in thought before they are guilty in deed, and that God forbids the thoughts of the heart, which, unless we are watchful, are 'only evil continually.'

DEAN FARRAR.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Pharisaism. PHARISAISM is a religious sin. No one but a religious person can be a true Pharisee. He is not necessarily a hypocrite. S. LUKE xviii. 9. S. Paul was a Pharisee, never a hypocrite.

Vision of Christ. HE came to me. He was not at all like the pictures of the saints; He was pale, worn, and thin, as though the fight was not yet half over—but through this pale and worn look shone infinite power, and undying love, and unquenchable resolve. . . . When He came to me, He stopped: 'Ah!' He said, 'is it thou? What doest thou here? Knowest thou not that thou art Mine? Thrice Mine—Mine centuries ago, when I hung upon the Cross on Calvary for such as thou; Mine years ago, when thou camest a little child to the font; Mine once again, when forfeit by

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every law, thou wast given over to Me by one who is a servant and a friend of Mine. Surely I will repay !' A healing sense of help and comfort, like the gentle dew, visited the weary heart. . . . And He passed on ; but among ten thousand times ten thousand I should know Him ; and amid the tumult of a universe, I should hear the faintest whisper of His voice.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	2 CORINTHIANS III. 4-9.
GOSPEL,	S. MARK VII. 31-37.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	1 KINGS XXII. TO VER. 41.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	2 KINGS II. TO VER. 16 OR 2 KINGS IV. VER. 8 TO VER. 38.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Need for Divine Enlightenment and Guidance.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord's besides, that we might inquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. 1 KINGS xxii. 6-8,



LAST Sunday we were face to face with Elijah and more remotely with Ahab, king of Israel, while each was still in the midst of his career; the king obeying the behests of his idolatrous wife, and persecuting the servants of God; the prophet encountering the idol system in all its strength, vanquishing it, seeing the fruits of his victory fade away before his very eyes, retiring in deep despondency into the desert, and yet pledging himself to the future by the call of his great successor, Elisha. But all human careers, even those

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which seem the greatest, are quickly spent; and to-day, in both cases, we have reached the close. In the first lesson of this afternoon, you have listened to the account of the great prophet's triumphant ascent by a whirlwind into heaven. In this morning's lesson, the weak and wicked monarch has encountered his predestined doom; and it is to the circumstances which immediately preceded the tragedy at Ramoth-gilead that I invite your attention.

Now, in order to thoroughly understand the historical setting of this conversation between Ahab and Jehoshaphat, which is given in the text, it is necessary to recall events that had occurred three years before this fatal expedition to take Ramoth-gilead. The power of Ben-hadad, king of Syria—at that period in the history of the kingdom of Israel, by far its most formidable enemy, for as yet Assyria, and still more Babylon, had not appeared upon the Mediterranean, the power of Ben-hadad had been broken, by a double, and, in the last case, by a decisive defeat. At the head of an army commanded by thirty-two vassal kings, Ben-hadad had insolently demanded the surrender of Ahab's wealth and possessions, even of his wives and children; and when his demand was pressed a second time in more peremptory terms, Ahab, in his weakness, resisted. Ben-hadad threatened that he would reduce the city of Samaria to ashes by so numerous an army that its very rubbish should scarcely suffice for each one of his soldiers to fill his hand; and to prove his contempt for the power of the Israelites, he gave orders for the attack to be made upon the city, whilst he himself was engaged in a mid-day carousal in his pavilion with his subject kings and his leading officers. The whole body of fighting Israelites was but seven thousand men—the exact number observe, of those who had not bowed the knee to Baal. But the victory over Ben-hadad—and to this the sacred writer calls special attention—was really won by only two hundred and thirty-two servants of the provincial governor's, men comparatively unarmed and without military training, who had come to seek shelter and safety in those troublous times within the walls of Samaria. Ben-hadad fled on horseback, while the king of Israel, at the head of his troops, completely defeated the besieging army. But hoping to retrieve his fortunes, and to recover his lost ascendancy, Ben-hadad entered on a fresh campaign with the new year. His advisers had assured him that the God of Israel was only 'a hill God,' whose power did not really extend to the plains, and that, therefore, a new campaign in the valley of Esdraelon might have a very different result from the last. They also recommended Ben-hadad to raise his army to its former numbers, and to remove the vassal kings and his chief officers, who were suspected of not having done their duty, from their positions of command. After taking these measures, Ben-hadad

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advanced to the siege of Aphek, in the vale of Esdraelon. The army of Israel, says the sacred writer, looked like two miserable flocks of goats, in contrast to the Syrian host, which filled the land with its vast levies ; and yet a second time, Ahab was victorious. One hundred thousand fighting men fell in one day, twenty-seven thousand were destroyed by the fall of the walls of Aphek, and Ben-hadad, now a captive and trembling for his life, faithfully and thankfully promised, if his life might only be spared, to allow the Israelites a quarter for their bazaars in the streets of Damascus, and to restore all the cities which had been won from Israel in the campaigns against Ahab's father, Omri. Upon the faith of these terms Ben-hadad was released, and a peace of three years followed.

Now, it was in reference to this treaty, at the expiration of the three years, that Ahab proposed to Jehoshaphat their making a joint expedition with a view of taking the city of Ramoth-gilead, which ought to have been surrendered with the rest, but which had been persistently held by the Syrians, notwithstanding the promise of Ben-hadad. Ahab had married his daughter to Jehoshaphat's son, and Jehoshaphat was on a visit at the court of Samaria, so that everything was favourable, putting religious interests out of the question, for the two kings to co-operate against Ramoth-gilead. Certainly, too, Ahab appeared to have natural justice on his side in his wish to recover Ramoth-gilead ; Ben-hadad having promised to surrender it, and by that promise having saved his life. Jehoshaphat had, at first, no hesitation in placing the whole force of the kingdom of Judah at the king of Israel's disposal for such an object. 'I am,' he said, 'as thou art ; my people as thy people ; my horses as thy horses.'

As against Ben-hadad, then, Ahab was in the right when he sought to recover Ramoth-gilead. But, there was another with whom he had to reckon, he had to reckon with God. Face to face with God, Ahab's real position was, at this period of his life, that of a condemned criminal ; and he, therefore, was not in a moral position to represent and to act on behalf of the rights of Israel. Not to speak of the misery which he had brought upon his country by his encouragement of Phœnician idolatry, he had placed himself under a ban by sparing, from a purely selfish motive, the life of Ben-hadad, which, like that of Agag, the Amalekite in an earlier age, could not be spared without injury to the theocracy. As he returned from his great victory, he met the prophet of the Lord, who, after attracting his attention by a symbolical action characteristic of the time, had announced his sentence : 'Thus saith the Lord, because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.' Then came, not long after, the more serious matter of Naboth's vine-

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yard, in which, at the instigation, and with the assistance of his wicked wife, Ahab had committed a judicial murder of singular atrocity, in order that he might improve his property. Then for the last time, in the garden of the murdered man, Elijah had met Ahab, had foretold the extinction of his house, and the circumstances of his end. It was in the character of a herald of the divine justice, placed, like Jeremiah, whom the Lord set over the nations and over the kingdoms, 'to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, as well as to build and to plant,' that Elijah thus passed sentence of death upon the king of Israel. Ahab's blood was to be licked up by the hungry dogs in the public square, where they had just licked up Naboth's. Ahab's subsequent sorrow led, indeed, to a modification of his sentence; his house was not to be extinguished absolutely with himself; but on himself, at the time of which we are speaking, the sentence of God's wrath, uttered by His prophet, lay in all its awful power.

These dreadful predictions must, from time to time, have rung, we should think, in the ears of Ahab. They would have been a matter of common conversation in Judah and Benjamin, not less than in Israel. They must have been also familiar to Jehoshaphat. For a while, indeed, Ahab's life passed quietly in the midst of a numerous family, and surrounded by a brilliant court. Strengthened, moreover, in the good opinion of his subjects by his recent military successes, and by his alliance with the powerful and enterprising king of Judah, Ahab would, no doubt, have succeeded in escaping, at least to a great extent, from his legitimate fears. But if, when after the lapse of time, Ahab proposed the joint expedition to Ramoth-gilead, his own faith in the words of the prophet did not suggest some reason for hesitation, Jehoshaphat, at least, was too prudent not to insist upon inquiry, at the hands of some accredited organ of the mind of God, into the wisdom of the expedition. Jehoshaphat, it is true, had consented to co-operate with Ahab, but before he set out he wished to know what God was thinking, what God was willing, about the proposed course, if he possibly could.

I. Let us pause for a moment, if only to note here a great duty in all men who really believe in God's providential care and love, the duty of ascertaining, so far as we can, what He would wish, what He would approve and disapprove, before we undertake any considerable work, or enter upon any new course in life. For it is certain that whatever we undertake in things great or small, in things spiritual, or temporal, He is watching us; He is passing judgment of some sort upon us; and He will one day call us to account for our actions. It is, at least, practical for us to think of this now. We may not, indeed, have prophets at hand who see visions in the heavens, unveiling as did the

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vision of Micaiah the inmost machinery of the divine government. God deals with His people in one way at one period, in another at a later one. But, by way of compensation, we do know more of the principles of His government than did the Israelites in the days of Ahab. We know more of His power, much more of His love, and more of His will, as they bear upon the details of human life. We can, therefore, in the great majority of cases, decide for ourselves the question of going up to Ramoth-gilead. We can always, and should always apply to God in prayer for enlightenment and guidance by His Holy Spirit within the soul through the course of events without it. Our prayer should be, 'Lead me forth in Thy truth, and learn me, for Thou art the God of my salvation.' For, most assuredly, God will take His own way of teaching us His will, and not seldom, now as of old, is that will best learnt from some friend whose moral and religious character, whose balanced judgment, whose ready sympathies, we can really trust; who will look at our case in a spirit of perfect goodwill, and yet with the high impartiality of perfect independence. Everything depends in a case of this kind on this question, Who is to be consulted? The gravest issues, as in Ahab's case, may hang upon the answer to that question. Ahab actually applied to four hundred prophets who were likely, he thought, by their numbers and position, to satisfy the scruples of Jehoshaphat, and to fortify the resolution at which he had arrived. But who were those prophets? Prophets of whom? The question has been eagerly debated among Biblical scholars. The opinion that they were the prophets of the Phœnician deities, Astarte or Baal, prophets who had not appeared upon Carmel and who had, therefore, escaped the doom of their colleagues, is inconsistent with the statement that Ahab was seeking to know the word of Jehovah at their hands. On the other hand, it is plain from Jehoshaphat's second demand that they were not legitimate prophets of the Lord, in the sense in which Elijah and the pupils of the prophetic schools were. They would, therefore, seem to have been prophets of Jehovah, whom they worshipped, illegally under the symbol of a calf; an order of men who had arisen in the reign of Jeroboam, and who practised prophesying as a profession, without any positive call from God, and who, at the present time, when the Phœnician idolatry had fallen into something like discredit, were in the pay, or at least under the influence, of the court of Samaria.

It must have been an extraordinary sight which was witnessed outside the principal gate of Samaria on that eventful day. Upon a platform erected a little in advance of the gate, were raised two thrones, upon which, in full regal splendour, sat the now intimately allied monarchs of Judah and of Israel, while the four hundred prophets, one after another, prophesied before them. In the dress, and

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with much of the manner of modern Eastern dervishes, one after another, each took up his parable, but the refrain of each was ever the same: 'Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.' One prophet there was, indeed, more intrepid and enterprising than the rest, Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, who particularly distinguished himself among the four hundred. He practically illustrated his prophecy by a dramatic or symbolic action to render it more impressive. He made horns of iron, that is to say spikes, in allusion to the figure employed by Moses in the vision of Joseph, which was intended to convey to the tribe of Ephraim a promise of perpetual favour; and then advancing from among the rest, towards the foot of the throne, he brandished his iron horns and cried to Ahab, 'With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou hast destroyed them.'

II. The demonstration, as a whole, was all that Ahab wanted. It was of value as a means of moulding public opinion in favour of the proposed expedition, and though he did not attach much weight to such things, it was in its way satisfactory to him. But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied. Indeed Ahab and Jehoshaphat were not really aiming at the same thing. Ahab merely wanted the sanction of religion, if he could possibly get it, upon a project as to which he had already made up his mind. Jehoshaphat really wished, if he could, to know what God's will was about Ahab's project. Jehoshaphat surveyed the four hundred prophets, their numbers, their picturesqueness, their peculiar position and influence; he listened to their loud, reiterated cry—'Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper'—reiterated, as if victory could be already assured by all this exuberance of official enthusiasm. But he was not content, and he turned to ask Ahab whether there was not 'a prophet of the Lord besides, that he might inquire of him?' Ahab was annoyed at the question; although on the part of Jehoshaphat it was strictly legitimate and inevitable. Jehoshaphat naturally could not trust the prophets of Jeroboam's schism—the prophets of the calves. Ahab sullenly replied, 'There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah,' but added that he hated Micaiah because of his never prophesying good of him, but evil. Still, a chamberlain was sent to fetch Micaiah, and on the way back this courtier expressed a hope that Micaiah would feel himself at liberty to prophesy in the same sense and terms as the four hundred had done. To this Micaiah replied that his message was not a plaything which he could mould at will, that he was instructed from heaven, and that he must speak according to the terms of his instructions, 'What the Lord sayeth unto me, that will I speak.' On reaching the royal presence Micaiah was asked, as had been the others, the formal question: 'Shall we go up against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?' And he

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answered, at first in the very words of the four hundred, 'Go up, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.' There must have been something in the prophet's tone which betrayed his real mind to the heart of Ahab—something which suggested that this was not the real judgment of the prophet, but only an ironical echo of the language of the courtiers, who were guided in their pretended inspiration by purely selfish and personal considerations. Ahab's suspicions were aroused, and, angry and frightened, he adjured Micaiah to speak only the truth in the name of Jehovah; and then it was that Micaiah told how he had seen in visions Israel scattered upon the mountains of Gilead, 'as sheep without a shepherd,' and how he had heard the voice of the true King of the nations sounding from the heavens: 'These have no master; let them return every one to his home in peace,' implying that Ahab would have fallen in the contemplated attack upon Ramoth-gilead. And when Ahab attributed his prophecy to Micaiah's personal hostility to himself, Micaiah replied, by showing how the Lord had determined that Ahab, being led astray by the predictions of teachers who were inspired by the spirit of falsehood, would be lured on to the war in which he would meet his doom.

This second vision has a bearing upon a great question, upon the permission and control of evil by a good God, which is of the utmost importance. It is not within our present purpose to consider it. We can only just glance at what followed, at the indignation of Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, at Micaiah's depreciatory account of the origin of his inspirations, at the altercation which ensued between him and Micaiah, at the king's sentence upon the intrepid prophet, upon whose life and history, as the prison doors of the house of the governor of Samaria close upon him, the Bible record throws no further light.

III. Now, here let us carefully note the fact that Ahab's tragical fate was the immediate consequence of preferring his own will, backed up by the advice of the four hundred, to the revelations of Micaiah. Why Jehoshaphat, after Micaiah's prophecy, still consented to join in the expedition we do not certainly know. It was, probably, an additional illustration of that element of weakness in his character which had led him to consent originally to a marriage alliance with the house of Ahab. But Ahab, although he took his own way, was haunted by a suspicion that the imprisoned and injured Micaiah might, after all, be right. Accordingly he entered the battle in disguise that he might not attract the notice of the Syrian archers; and Jehoshaphat, who was the only soldier with royal decorations on his person, being mistaken for the king of Israel, was in consequence exposed to a charge of unusual violence, from which he was with

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difficultly rescued by his bodyguard. But Ahab's precautions were all in vain. No human contrivance can avert the execution of the divine decrees. A Syrian archer drew his bow, as the Hebrew expresses it, in his simplicity—that is to say, without any one man in particular; and he struck the king of Israel at the point where his iron breastplate joined the hanging skirt, which covered the lower part of his body. Ahab knew at once that the wound was mortal, but, that he might not dishearten his soldiers, he, with the help of his armour-bearer, stiffened himself into an upright posture before the advancing Syrians, while his ebbing life blood gradually filled the hollow of the chariot in which he rode. 'Towards sunset the truth became known throughout the army of Israel; then the cry went forth, the solemn cry, 'Every man to his city, and every man to his land.' The royal chariot returned to Samaria, but the king whom it bore ceased to breathe, and it was noted how, when they washed the chariot in the public pool or conduit at Samaria, the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, at the scene and under the circumstances foretold by Elijah.

The character of Ahab's mind at this, the last crisis of his sad and eventful life, is seen in two respects; in his willingness to consult the prophets of the calves, in his prejudice against Micaiah. They are the two sides of a disposition towards religion, which, in its principle, is fundamentally one and the same, a disposition which was exhibited in all its main features by Saul, the first king of the chosen people. It is not downright contemptuous, bitter opposition; still less is it the loyalty of faith and love. It is a willingness to welcome religion, if religion will only sanction the projects, the views, the passions, the characters, of its patrons. Ahab anticipated, to a certain extent, the ideas of writers such as Hobbes and Malmesbury; writers who have been convinced that religion is a great power in human life and history, that it can be made useful in winning the minds of men to the political measures which are resolved upon by earthly governments, in making the process of government easier by reinforcing it with something like a supernatural lustre in the eyes of the multitude. Ahab had no notion of seeking the will of God for himself, with the simple intention of obeying it. He welcomed the four hundred, because he knew beforehand exactly what the four hundred would say. He knew that they were his creatures; he knew that they were not in a position to give him honestly independent advice at this most critical juncture, that in fact they would simply echo in religious language, a conclusion at which he himself had before arrived on grounds of political expediency. He followed not them, but himself. He disobeyed a voice which he could not silence, which, willingly, he would not have heard. He knew that Micaiah

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was an independent adviser, but he did not want to be told unwelcome truths, even in a matter of life and death. He took his own way, and his tragical end was the consequence of his doing so.

IV. Let us learn, hence, two lessons ; and first, an important principle of Church polity, the importance of making religious teachers, if you can, independent of those whom they have to teach. The question is a very practical one. When a new parochial district, for instance, is being laid out, and an income has to be provided for the proposed incumbent, why, it is asked, should there be any endowment? Why cannot a modern clergyman subsist upon the voluntary offerings of his flock as the Apostles did before him? I do not deny that many men can do so; that in all ages of the Church, you will find those who inherit, along with the apostolic commission the apostolic spirit in all its fulness—men who, in S. Paul's exact sense, have learned in whatsoever state they are therewith to be content. But these are, generally speaking, men who, for the better doing of their Master's work, refuse to embarrass themselves with the cares of a family, and have no one's support to provide for as a matter of strict duty but their own. But if you resolve—and there are grave reasons to justify your resolutions—if you resolve that the mass of your clergy shall be married men, you must make up your minds either to make them independent, or to surround yourselves too often, and too certainly, with the echoes of your own inclinations and wishes with the four hundred prophets of the calves. The clergyman, who with a number of children depending upon him, has to think from the first day of the year, about the collection which will be made for him at the end of it, must be heroic indeed if he never yields to the temptation of softening down a truth which is unwelcome to his paymasters, or extenuating a fault which is notoriously popular among them. There are, of course, some of the laity in every generation who would rather have it so. They do not, they say, like too much independence on the part of the clergy. They do not want prophets of God, but exponents of their own tastes and opinions. They prefer Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, with his magnificent compliments, with his horns of iron, to Micaiah the son of Imlah, with his simple capacity saying nothing but the truth. They fear that an independent clergy will abuse their independence; and it is, of course, impossible to deny, that at particular periods of Church history and in particular countries, this has been the case on a considerable scale. The clergy are of course not perfect, not infallible. They are not exempt from the temptation to abuse their trust; but a man goes much more against the instincts of a healthy conscience, if he abuses it in the interest of a professional, or of a class ambition, than if he abuses it that he may feed and clothe those who are nearest and dearest to

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him. It is the laity who suffer most, much more by a dependent clergy, than do the clergy themselves. The wounds which may be left in a clerical conscience, when truth has been concealed, or sin palliated for the sake of daily bread, are terribly avenged by the self-inflicted moral and spiritual degradation of a Christian community, which voluntarily can seek in its religious teachers, not the best that it can learn the will of the All Holy, uttered in all its integrity with a fearless independence, but the mere reflection in religious language, of its own shortsightedness, of its own worldliness, in a word, of its own resolution to go up, come what may, to Ramoth-gilead.

See too, here, a lesson of religious practice. They who do not seek false teachers may yet take only so much of the true teaching as falls in with their own lower inclinations. And this is another form of the error of Ahab. They do not go so far as to consult the prophets of the calves, but they have no inclination to listen to all that Micaiah, the son of Imiah, has to say to them. This may be seen in the way in which many men read the Bible. It is not merely that they have, as the phrase is, their 'favourite books' and their 'favourite chapters.' That is intelligible, because God may most assuredly attract one soul through this part of His revelation, and another soul through another. But it is that they take no heed of the rest, while it is probable that the very portions that they never read, or which they are imprudent enough to deem of inferior, or of no importance, may be the very portions of the Bible which their particular characters need the most. They study the Sermon on the Mount; they have nothing to say to the Epistles of S. Paul. Or they study a few chapters in the Romans and Galatians; they never read, and do not like S. James. Or they do not see the use of the historical books of the Old Testament, or the enthusiasms of the Psalter, or the visions of Ezekiel, and the Apocalypse. It seems a slavery to them to follow, day by day, the settled order of the Church lessons; and yet, if they would do this, they would be in a fair way to get at the whole counsel of God, as set before them in His Holy Word, as they would almost go through the whole of the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice, in the course of a year, and would not be in danger of omitting those parts of the sacred volume, which, though not quite so agreeable, are not on that account the less useful to themselves. In the same way, men have their favourite duties, the performance of which as they think without saying so relieves them from the performance of the rest. They would on no account break the eighth commandment or the sixth: they are less careful about the seventh and the ninth. They are alive to the importance of charity: they do not attach much value to daily prayer. They practise the social virtues: they care little about the personal virtues. They are care-

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ful to be kindly and generous in small matters: they see no harm in being grasping, even to the very verge of dishonesty, in great ones. They pay their debts regularly, but they neglect the Holy Communion. They have books, they have prophets of their own which put the Divine Will before them in a manner which consults their predilections. And in the same way men have their favourite doctrines. Micaiah may preach of the divine benevolence, but he must say very little about divine justice. He may show the social advantages of Christianity; he had better say but little of its mysteries. He may enlarge on the blessings of accepting redemption: he must say nothing of the consequence of rejecting it. If God, in short, will only say what His creature approves of, His creature will be content. But if the gospel or creed, like Micaiah's message of old, has its 'warning clauses,' so much the worse for creed or gospel, when Ahab is sitting on his throne at the gate of Samaria, and has made up his mind, come what may, to go up to Ramoth-gilead.

Our first work in our souls, the work upon which everything else depends, is to be true. To seek to know ourselves, indeed, as we are, and God, so far we can, as He is. To distrust all that, as we think, merely reflects our own wishes, to make the most of all that speaks fearlessly of and for God, about God, about ourselves. To determine that we will not less prize a knowledge of this kind because it humbles, because it disappoints, because it pains and checks us, in a thousand ways, for this knowledge is the very first step in the road to Calvary, which is the road to Paradise. To stifle, to mutilate, to debauch if we could do so, the accents of the Divine Voice is but to seal our own death-warrant. We have nothing to fear from the humiliations that the true standard of the gospel may—nay, must—inflict upon our guilty consciences, because we may rise out of, and by, these very humiliations, up to that Cross which saves us from them.

In the last contest with death, which is before each one of us, like the dying Ahab sinking down into his chariot, we shall think cheaply enough of the four hundred prophets who have charmed us here through life by a thousand organs of opinion: we shall know that after all, He who spoke by Micaiah was surely right. May He grant that in those solemn moments this knowledge may not have come too late, that we may be stayed on the Hands that were pierced for our salvation, that we may know Him whom we have, at whatever cost, believed, as the eternal reward of a faith which will then be melting into sight.

H. P. LIDDON.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Two Ministrations, the Law and the Gospel.

For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 2 CORINTHIANS iii. 9.



WHEN Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, had made alliance with Jehoram, the wicked king of Israel, they went down together to consult Elisha, the prophet of the Lord. Conscious of the dignity of his office, and not overawed by the majesty of princes, Elisha could scarcely bring himself to hold communication with one who wrought evil in the sight of the Lord. Elisha said, 'As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee.' There is something very striking in this righteous independence. The prophet deserves the imitation, no less than the admiration, of all the servants of God, seeing that he acted on the clear, though often forgotten principle, 'Rank can bestow no nobility on vice.' We refer to this instance simply to show, that the prophet knew that there belonged to him, as a messenger from God, an authority so commanding, that even the great ones of the earth were bound to render him respect; and if occasions arose when this authority seemed questioned or despised, Elisha was prepared to assert boldly his right to take his stand on the lofty ground of a superiority derived from a divine commission. The Apostles of Christ, under the gospel dispensation, imitated in this respect the conduct of the prophet. It was thus especially, you will see, that the Apostle, who, though willing to submit to every kind of privation and wrong, so that souls might be won to the Saviour, was always determined to maintain the authority which his office conveyed. Accordingly, when false teachers had crept into the Corinthian Church, who endeavoured to commend themselves by depreciating S. Paul, this man of God asserted, with holy vehemence, the claim which he had on the respect and affections of Christians.

Thus, in the chapter from which our text is taken, he magnifies his apostleship by bringing it into juxtaposition with the office committed to Moses. He argues that there must have been a great glory about the legal dispensation, seeing that when the tables of the law were given into the hands of the lawgiver, there flashed from his face a brightness which overpowered the children of Israel. He

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then concludes, that if the dispensation itself were glorious, it must have been a glorious thing to have been intrusted with its ministration; thus claiming high honour to Moses as appointed to be the giver of the law. But if it were thus honourable to exercise a ministration which, after all, was a ministration of death, must it not be vastly more honourable to exercise a ministration which was a ministration of life? And if, therefore, glory accrued to Moses from the one ministration, ought not still greater glory to accrue to S. Paul from the other?

Such seems a fair outline of the argument of the Apostle, dispersed as it is over the whole of the chapter. But we are not so much concerned with the general drift of S. Paul's reasoning, as with the incidental statement which that reasoning led him to advance. We have, in our text, definitions of the law and the gospel, which demand the best of our attention, irrespective of the conclusions to which they conduct. The preaching of the law is defined as a ministration of condemnation, nevertheless it is glory; the preaching of the gospel as a ministration of righteousness; and this is said much more to exceed in glory. There is much material for interesting thought in these separate definitions and characteristics. Let us apply ourselves, therefore, at once to their consideration. Our first topic of discourse is, that the law was a ministration of condemnation, but nevertheless glory; we shall, then, in the second place, have to consider the gospel as a ministration of righteousness, and to see if there be not full warrant for the assertion, 'If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.'

I. Now there is, perhaps, something which, on the first mention, jars with our feelings in the fact, that it was with a perfect knowledge that man could not obey the law, that the Almighty placed him under that law as a covenant. We can readily understand, that the freest mercy might preside over the institution of that ministration which, being found to produce nothing but death, might, by the same mercy, be exchanged for another; but we do not readily understand how, with all the foreknowledge of disastrous failure, benevolence could have dictated the legal dispensation. Yet, in truth, there is no difficulty but what arises from the forgetfulness of the union between the law and the gospel. If the two systems had been altogether detached, the gospel having no connection whatsoever with the law, there would have existed great cause for wonder at God's appointing a ministration of condemnation. But when it is remembered, that the law was most strikingly introductory to the gospel, so that the covenant of works literally made way for the covenant of grace, all surprise ought to vanish, and all doubt to be removed, as

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to the institution being consistent with love. If, indeed, God had placed men under the law, and left them to sink beneath its demands, we might have found it difficult to reconcile the proceeding with His fond compassion towards the alienated and the lost. But from the earliest moment of human apostasy, God's dealing with the fallen had always a reference to the work of atonement; He looked upon the world as a redeemed world, at the very instant of its becoming rebellious! He never came forth from the majesty of His own solitude, and condescended to open an intercourse between Himself and His creatures, without bringing upon the scene—sometimes more brilliantly, and sometimes more dimly—the awful mysteries of the work of reconciliation. Whatever, then, the dispensation which, for wise ends, He might temporally institute, it was never altogether detached from Christ; but, on the contrary, there was always much in this arrangement which took for granted the suretyship of Jesus. And we hold that such was pre-eminently the case in regard of the covenant of the law. Take the moral law by itself, and it was necessarily, as we shall afterwards show you, a ministration of condemnation; yet those who lived under this ministration of death were not necessarily left to die. The law itself could work only death, but they unto whom it had been issued might nevertheless have found life. Know ye not, that whilst the legal dispensation was in the fulness of its strength, there passed many an Israelite into the kingdom of heaven; and that, long ere the dawning of that splendid day on which Christ Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, thousands went down in peace to the grave, obtaining gratuitously the deliverance which they could never have won meritoriously? And what account do we give of this, except that the ministration, which, by itself, was one of condemnation, was so allied with another ministration, and that a ministration of acquittal, that even whilst the covenant of works was in the fulness of its strength, there lay a clear passage between earth and heaven, which might be traversed by those who could present no obedience which should approach to perfection. We carry you to the scenes of temple-worship, and whilst the high priest is laying the sin of the people on the head of the scape-goat, and the blood of victims is poured forth in typical expiation, and the cloud of incense is mounting and covering the mercy-seat, and there goes forward all that complicated business of the ceremonial institution, every tittle of which prefigured redemption—we bid you learn from the emblematical announcement—that no man was condemned because living under the ministration of condemnation; but that, even whilst the moral law was unrepealed as a covenant, no one perished under it who looked onwards to a long-promised sacrifice.

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Though the law was a ministration of condemnation, it was nevertheless glory. 'If the ministration of condemnation,' says our text, 'be glory.' The chief object of S. Paul's reasoning, as we have already intimated, was the showing that the office held by Moses, as the law-giver of Israel, was an honourable office; the brightness of his face, when he descended from the mount, was a testimony of this fact. But, forasmuch as the glory of being a minister could result only from the glory of that which was ministered, we swerve not from the Apostle's line of argument, if we consider the law itself, and not the ministration, as the subject whose glory is affirmed. And was it, then, a dispensation beaming with glory which opened up no deliverance to the wretched; which, proffering salvation on impossible conditions, 'Do this and live,' seemed to mock human impotence rather than to provide for human necessity? Was that a glorious arrangement, which, with all the show of an interposition on behalf of the fallen, could never have snatched from destruction a solitary individual, which could only have issued in the impressment of a yet deeper curse on an already depressed and groaning population? It was mainly in consequence of its own perfection that the law thus proved a minister of condemnation. Had the law been a defective law, constructed so as to be adapted to the weakness of the parties on whom it was imposed, and not to the attributes of Him from whom it proceeded, it is altogether supposable that the result might not have been the condemnation of mankind. This, we say, is supposable, though we are by no means persuaded that any law whatever could have made such allowances for human infirmity as to have warded off the issue of human condemnation. You remember that S. Paul writes to the Galatians, 'If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.' Here he certainly seems to imply, that if man could have obtained justification by any law he would have obtained it by the moral law. So that we are far from being sure that law could have been pared down to any such smallness of requirement as to let go fallen creatures, absolved and purified; rather we should be disposed to uphold the opinion, that in every case divine law would so powerfully excite the antipathies of human beings, that God could have required nothing so trifling that would not have been refused by our race. But, whatever the possibility of constructing a law which man could have obeyed, suppose it constructed, would it have been glorious? It could not have been a perfect law; for a perfect law, as we have shown you, must be a ministration of condemnation; and if not a perfect law, wherein could lie its glory? You tell me, in the fact of its being a practical and saving law, and allowing the wretched to work out deliverance from their wretchedness. Then the glory

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lies in the imperfection of the law; then it is glory that law should be constructed on the principle of mutilated justice, and compromised holiness; then it is glory that the law should make loopholes for offenders, in place of ramparts against offences; then it is glory that law should be a system of apologies for frailties, and not of resistances to evil. And call ye this glory? Call ye it glory that the law should have proved a ministration of acquittal, when you must admit that the creatures whom it absolved could have obtained no verdict but one of stern condemnation, had not God dealt with them by a law most dishonouring to Himself? No, no! this was the glory, that the law was a ministration of condemnation. We say not, it was glory that man must perish; but we do say, that it was glory that, if either man must perish or God be dishonoured, there should be a system of legislation which left indeed the human race in ruins, but wrote on the sepulchre, that God had magnified His perfections. We call this glory, we call it glory, that the moral law was the transcript of the divine mind. We call it glory, that this law displayed God as God, as that Being unto whom one moral spot on the wide surface of creation would be reason enough why He should command it indignantly into nothingness. Though it were a result worthy to be wept over by all those ranks of beings who have kept fast their allegiance, that one generation after another should appear at God's tribunal, and, tried by the moral law, be swept to destruction; yet, forasmuch as this general consignment to perdition would only exhibit the unflinching justice of the Almighty, we believe that over and above the wailings of lost men, and the lamentations of holy angels, would be heard the acknowledgment, that the law had proved its rights to the title of glory, in proving itself what it is called in our text, a ministration of condemnation.

II. But enough on S. Paul's definition of the law; let us now briefly endeavour to set before you the gospel, as a ministration of righteousness. It is, therefore, far surpassing the law in its glory. There is a kind of opposition, as it would seem, between the several points of the text; and from this opposition much of its meaning may be derived. The ministration of righteousness is set in a kind of antithesis to the ministration of condemnation. But if we had been asked to define the precise opposite to the ministration of condemnation, we should probably have spoken of a ministration of acquittal, or of a ministration of acceptance; and we think it fair to infer from this undoubted substitution of righteousness for acceptance, that S. Paul designed to point out righteousness as the cause or groundwork for acceptance. By defining the gospel as a ministration of righteousness, and setting it in opposition to a ministration of condemnation, he virtually affirms that by and through righteous-

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ness condemnation is escaped; and forasmuch, moreover, as the very reason of the law, by a ministration of condemnation, lies in man's proved incapacity of presenting a righteousness of his own, it must certainly follow, from S. Paul's definition, that it would be by and through the righteousness of another that acceptance with God is procured. Thus we consider, that in the very terms of this definition of the gospel, lie couched the grand doctrines of the gospel. We assert of the gospel, that it is a ministration of righteousness, just because it is a system which, assuming that man can have no meritorious righteousness of his own, puts him in a position wherein he appropriates the meritorious righteousness of another. The law which had been given to man, and broken by man, must be both obeyed by man in its precepts, and satisfied by man in its penalties, otherwise there could be no pardon and no acceptance for man; and therefore did the Son of God, as the new Head of our race, gather humanity into His own Divine Person, and obeying to the veriest tittle, and enduring to the last fraction, magnify the law, and make it honourable. He did not destroy the law, He put not aside its claims, He did not compel it to relax its requirements; but, through the ensured aids of the Eternal Spirit, He strengthened the human nature in His own Divine Person to do all which the law demanded, and suffer all which the law denounced: and when our nature had both presented a perfect obedience, and paid the outstanding debt, it became possible that all who partake of this nature, and who will look to Christ as the great repairer of the breach, may be transferred from the dispensation of condemnation and death to another of acquittal and life. So that we bear in mind the connection which we have already asserted between the law and the gospel, and we state that the ministration of condemnation merged, as it were, into the ministration of righteousness. The law which gave us over to death, so long as we were left to obey it for ourselves, consigns us to life, when we close by faith with the suretyship of a Mediator. And we further declare of the gospel, that it is a ministration of righteousness, because therein, as the Apostle elsewhere saith, is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. We call it a ministration of righteousness, because it proposes to us the righteousness of the High Priest of our profession, as the procuring cause of our acceptance with God. It comes down upon us in all our weakness and wretchedness, even whilst we are banded in rebellion and wasted by disease. It discloses to us a method of justification; and preaching Christ, as 'made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,' bids us throw off the raiment of corruption, and spring upwards in the garniture of immortality. In its every department it is a ministration of righteousness. The

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gospel is the mightiest display of God's righteousness. Where has God equally shown His hatred of sin, His settled determination to **wring** its punishment from the impenitent? It is a system, moreover, whose grand feature is the application to man of the righteousness of Christ; 'Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And, then, this gospel, while displaying a perfect righteousness which hath been wrought out for us, insists peremptorily on a righteousness which must be wrought in us by God's Spirit making our own holiness—though it can obtain nothing by way of merit—indispensably necessary by way of preparation. If, then, the gospel be the noblest exhibition of the Son's righteousness, and if its requirements from man be that righteousness which is the work of the Spirit wrought in him, then inasmuch as, surveyed under every point of view, righteousness is a characteristic of the gospel, surely you will give in your assent to the truth of the assertion, that the ministration of this gospel is a ministration of righteousness; and if the law, though a ministration of condemnation, be glory, does not the gospel, the ministration of righteousness, much more exceed in glory?

Yes, it was glory that God should issue enactments which displayed His own perfections, though they carried with them the death-warrant of the whole human race. Again, we say, there could have been no glory in a law which man could have kept; it must have been an imperfect law, and therefore a law unworthy of God to put forth. It was glory, that when it pleased the Creator to issue a code for the government of His creatures, He provided that this code should image forth to the whole intelligent universe the spotless purity of His nature, and that He was not arrested in graving Himself on the tables of stone by the thought that thus characterised, they would weigh down by their own ponderousness the children of men. It was glory that God should prove Himself holy and just, though the proof were extorted from the despair and anguish of untold myriads; but if the perfection were a thousandfold more brilliantly displayed, and if the proof were a thousandfold more energetic, if all the while a blessing and not a curse, life and not death, were ranged on the side of the fallen, would not the former glory be vastly outdone by the latter? And what is this but the gospel set in contrast with the law? The law glorifies God by its unlimited demands, its uncompromising threatenings, but it could gain no fulfilment of the one, and therefore must the world be left sunk beneath the weight of the other. Vain were all human endeavours to satisfy the law's requirements; therefore it remained that the vengeance should take effect, and God be glorified in terrible judgment, overwhelming the disobedient. But oh how different is the case with regard to the

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gospel! The gospel glorifies God, inasmuch as it is a scheme which shows with infinitely greater clearness than the law that God hates sin, for, 'sending His own Son in the Flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh,' and that God will punish sin, for He commanded His sword to awake against His fellow. And yet withal that God loves man, loves him with a love which throbs and yearns over its objects, for 'He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.' It were vain to look in the law for such manifestations of divine glory as this. The law could show God just, it could not show Him just and yet a justifier. It is, indeed, in the prophecies of Isaiah, that we read of this wondrous combination, 'just God and a Saviour;' but it is only in the gospel of Christ we ascertain how such a combination could ever be formed; and if it be a greater glory that justice should be so satisfied as to consent to the outgoings of mercy towards the lost than that mercy should for ever be pent up by the unanswered claims of justice; that in punishing sin God should save the sinner than that He should destroy the sinner to condemn the sin; that He should inscribe Himself 'Holy' on a renovated creation, sparkling with beauty and sunny with happiness, than that He should register the attribute on a devastated earth, torn and tossed by the whirlwind of His wrath; ah! then you may readily understand why, in the matter of glory, S. Paul gives the gospel such vast superiority over the law; for if it be a greater glory that whilst God is honoured in all His properties man should be delivered than that whilst honoured in some of His properties man should be destroyed, then, indeed, the conclusion comes out clear and irresistible, 'If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.'

H. MELVILL.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Giving with Misgiving.

He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha. S. MARK vii. 34.

- I.  T was an undoubted benefit which Christ was about to bestow. The sufferer before Him endured a double misery.

He was deaf; but his trouble did not end there. If pain and privation long to cry out and find relief in utterance, this boon, too, was denied him. The fire of yearning love glowing in a heart which longed for sympathy might kindle; but he could not speak with his tongue; the unruly member,

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which in most is only too swift to speak, refused to do his bidding; expression of thought and feeling, dear to us, and deemed so needful by most, was denied him. He was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. These miseries Christ was about to relieve. He was going to unstop the silent ear, and the many voices of earth and the welcome voices of human love would be heard. He was going to release the captive tongue, and the man might say the things which his full heart longed to speak. The sufferer would no more be a maimed and incomplete human being, but restored to full and perfect physical manhood.

A blessing deep and great it would be to the sufferer, and yet Jesus Christ sighed. He knew well and sadly that every benefit is not a blessing, that in the sad story of life the blessing was sometimes turned into a curse. The shadow of the future stole in upon the present; for men are willing enough to be blessed, but often wilful in turning away their blessings, or in converting them to bitterness.

II. The special gift which our Saviour was about to bestow was one very likely to be turned into a curse. He was giving freedom to the tongue. No faculty which man possesses is so potent for evil or for good. It is the main medium of his influence over his fellow-man. More than in anything else the speech is the man, unless he be a hypocrite. The wise man knew its power, when he said that life and death were in the power of the tongue. Our Lord recognised how completely it represented the real man, when He gave the warning, 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' S. James perceived its terrific energy for evil, and the awful frequency of its abuse, when he denounced it as an untameable wild beast, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison!

And our own experience is only too fatally prolific of further proofs. How often has the unchecked tongue blasted the reputation and the hopes of men! How many a time the dreams and the rightful expectations of life in each other's love have been dashed away from young lovers' eyes by the mischievous and malicious whispers of irresponsible gossips! How many a man's prosperity and fortune have collapsed before a false report, or unwarrantably repeated truth! Love, life, truth, honour, all that give grace to being, have been scattered by the whispering tongue which poisons truth. No wonder, then, that, with all the devastation which the unlawful tongue had wrought in earth spread before His mind, Christ should be saddened as He loosened the fettered member, or sigh when He whispered, 'Ephphatha.'

III. Ephphatha, *i.e.* 'Be opened.' The Ephphatha of Christ was not spoken in Decapolis only. The rule of God's guidance in the

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rise and fall of nations, in the discovery of new laws, in the perfection of new arts, is the manifestation of the authority and kingship of Christ. The providence of God, it has been well said, is the mediatorial work of Christ. His voice is heard in the world, and His gifts are bestowed for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. There is an Ephphatha heard in history. He sighed, Ephphatha! and the conflict of the Church was revealed to His evangelist. He sighed, Ephphatha! and the tongue of Galileo and Kepler told of the wondrous order of the heavens. He sighed, Ephphatha! and buried monuments gave up their records of the past, and threw side-lights on higher truths. He spake, Ephphatha! and Caxton gave new powers to the world. Knowledge stepped forth from her dust-covered shrine, and carried her rich bounties into every city and every house. History unlocked her long-hidden lore, and science painted in clearer colours the half-veiled face of nature. The tongue of Europe was loosed. But well might a sigh have been heaved as the Ephphatha was spoken. It is not truth alone, or holiness alone, which has been unlocked. It is not 'the well of English undefiled,' the pure song of Spenser, the heart-rousing vision of Dante, the chivalrous epic of Tasso, the stately and magnanimous verse of Milton alone, which have been given to the world. A fouler current mingles with the bright pure stream, and darkens the flood of knowledge—the unredeemed filth of Boccaccio, the unbridled licentiousness of Scarron, the stupid sensuality of Dancourt, the open indecency of Wycherly, the more fatal suggestiveness of Sterne. Like a deluge the wide-flowing flood of profane, immoral, and Christ-hating books pours forth upon the world. The press became indeed the voice of nations; but when it was loosed, a sigh drawn from the pure heart of Christ, wounded by the misuse of a glorious opportunity, might have been heard by the Church of God.

Vain, indeed, are our gifts of reason, fancy, imagination, observation, and patient attention to nature's laws, unless they are used to help forward ourselves and human kind on the road which leads to brighter, higher, and nobler life. Without that shaping, guiding voice to teach, and unless the ears are open to hear His words, we may speak greatly, sing sweetly, investigate freely, criticise keenly, but we shall not speak or sing or think holily or highly. We shall be as those who have every gift for which we have asked, save the one which would enable us to use them rightly. We shall be, like the fabled Tithonus, dowered with immortal age, but lacking the eternal youth to make our gifts of highest service. If we are wise and humble, therefore, we shall not merely covet earnestly the best gifts, but we shall also pray for grace to use them lawfully and lovingly.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

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The Deaf and Dumb Man Healed.

And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. S. MARK vii. 35.

LET us notice how the miracle was wrought. It was wrought—
I. In answer to a request. ‘They bring unto Him one that was deaf and that had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Jesus to put His hands upon him.’

They that brought this poor deaf and dumb man to Jesus had heard of the fame of Jesus, from the sayings of the demoniac whom He had healed; and they probably thought that He, who could cast out devils, could also impart hearing and speech. It may be, too, that they had read that the Messiah, when He came, according to the prophecy uttered concerning Him seven hundred years before, would work miracles of this nature. Isaiah had said that, when the Messiah should appear, ‘the ears of the deaf should be unstopped,’ and that ‘the tongue of the stammerers should be ready to speak plainly.’ Whether or not those who brought this deaf and dumb man were encouraged by these prophecies, and whether or not they thought Jesus to be the Messiah, they came to Him with the request that He would heal their afflicted friend. They knew by report of the power of Jesus, and therefore they came, with the prayer, like that of the leper, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst give hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb.’

What an example for our imitation! The Apostle S. James says, ‘Ye have not, because ye ask not.’ If we will not come to Jesus for our spiritual necessities, we cannot expect to receive from Him the cures we require. Whereas if we came continually to Jesus in prayer, as did David, our hearts would be frequently uttering his song of praise and thanksgiving, ‘I love the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my petition. Therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.’

And how encouraging is this incident as respects intercessory prayer. These people of Decapolis came to Jesus with a request, not for themselves, but for a fellow-creature. And when we, like them, intercede with Jesus on behalf of other men, we may expect an answer of peace. We are told to ‘pray one for another.’ We are also told that ‘the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.’

But when we have prayed, whether for ourselves or for our brethren, we must not dictate to God the mode in which our requests are to be granted. We must leave Christ to fulfil our petitions in His own way. This was the mistake made by the inhabitants of

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Decapolis. For observe, secondly, that this miracle was wrought, not only in answer to a request, but also—

II. In private. They that brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus prescribed the mode of his recovery. They erred in the same way as did Naaman, the Syrian. Naaman, in his own mind, had pictured the method of his cure. He thought Elisha would come out and lay his hands upon the place, and so recover the leprosy. These suppliants committed a similar error. They beseech Jesus to ‘put His hand upon him,’ and heal him, as Jesus had done in other cases. But Jesus did otherwise. Instead of putting ‘His hand upon him,’ and healing him on the spot, He took Him aside. He took him apart from the crowd, and performed the cure in private. Why He took him aside we are not told. It might be intended to teach us humility. It might be intended to teach us not to court popularity or notoriety, not to let our voices be heard in the streets, not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth; to do good privately, and to avoid ostentation.

But whatever object our Lord had in view in taking the man aside before he performed the miracle, one lesson we may learn, and that is, that if we would obtain spiritual cures, we must seek Him in private. The self-righteous Pharisee, when he performs his devotions, likes to be seen of men. He likes to be seen praying either in the chief seats of the synagogue, or at the corners of the street. But the broken-hearted publican shuts to his door, and prays in secret. He enters into his closet, where no eye is upon him but the all-seeing eye of Jesus, and there he pours forth his earnest and contrite petition, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ For the sake of privacy, Nathanael prayed under the fig-tree. For the sake of privacy, Jesus spent whole nights in prayer on the mountain-top. For the sake of privacy, Daniel knelt upon his knees in his chamber and prayed, and gave thanks there before his God. And if we spent more time in private with Jesus, we should come forth in public with our faces shining like the face of Moses, thus evincing that our spiritual disorders have been entirely cured. This explains why it is the Lord Jesus lays us upon sick-beds, and so takes us aside from the world. It is that He may hold secret converse with us, and do us good, apart from our fellow-men.

But however the cure is effected, the Lord Jesus generally works His cures in His own way. So it was in the case before us. This cure was wrought, not only in answer to a request, and in private, but also—

III. By the use of means. Jesus, if He pleased, could have laid His hands upon the deaf and dumb man, and so have healed him in a moment. But no; He used means. ‘He put His fingers into his

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ears, and spat, and touched His tongue.' Now why Jesus employed these particular means, no one can say. Some have given reasons, but these reasons appear fanciful and not satisfactory. One thing is certain, these means did not work as a charm or spell, such as those impostors used, who had familiar spirits, who peeped and muttered. There was no near, if any, connection between the means used and the cure effected.

It may be that our Lord's great object was to point out that, although in themselves means are nothing without His blessing, yet those means which He has prescribed, however unsuitable they may appear to us, He will ever have used. We must use the means which God appoints, if we would expect the end to be attained. We are concerned with the means alone. The blessing rests entirely with the Lord.

Notice, now, therefore, the fourth particular in connection with the miracle. It was also wrought—

IV. With authority. Looking up to heaven, Jesus sighed, and then said to the man 'Ephphatha,' which is a Syriac word meaning, 'Be opened.'

Jesus 'looked up to heaven,' to signify to this poor man and the bystanders that the cure must come from God; that the hearing ear and the seeing eye the Lord has made, and that He can remake even both of them. He likewise wished to show that in all their miracles He wrought, 'He and the Father were one.'

He also sighed, to show how He sympathised in the sorrows and sicknesses and weaknesses which have been brought into this our fallen world through sin. He is therefore a merciful and compassionate high priest, able to weep with them that weep, to sorrow with them that sorrow; a sympathising and loving Saviour, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

The authoritative utterance of that word, 'Ephphatha,' was the effectual remedy. He that once said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light—He that said, 'Lazarus, come forth, and he that was bound with graveclothes did come forth—now said 'Ephphatha,' be opened, and 'straightway the deaf man's ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.'

Here, then, we see how we are to obtain the blessings we require. We must pray for ourselves, and others must also pray for us. We must seek Jesus in private. We must diligently and conscientiously use all the means which He has appointed. Yet after all, we must remember that it is the sovereign and authoritative word of Christ that must command the success we desire. Paul, of course, must plant. Apollos, of course, must not omit to water. But God alone can give the increase. A disconsolate preacher may, like the Apostles of old,

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be toiling all the night of a long ministry and take nothing. But if Jesus comes and gives the command where to cast the net, great shall be the number of souls that shall be taken. You remember how this was the case with S. Peter, that fisher of men, at the great day of Pentecost, when, by the Spirit's blessing, one sermon of S. Peter wrought marvellous results. No fewer than three thousand sinners were pricked to the heart, were converted and saved. In the work, therefore, of bringing souls to glory, we may with good reason say with the psalmist, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice. Not unto us, not unto us, but to the Lord alone belongs the praise.' This must be our song on earth, as it soon will be, I trust, our song in heaven. 'Salvation—not through our own goodness, not through our own wisdom, not through our own power; but salvation to God and the Lamb. Salvation to God the Father, who gave His dear Son; salvation to Jesus Christ, that precious Lamb of God, whose Blood has washed us from our sins; salvation to God the Spirit, who quickened our dead souls; salvation to the Triune Jehovah, who has brought us off more than conquerors, and made us kings and priests; and we shall reign for ever and ever.'

C. CLAYTON.

The Sigh of Jesus.

And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. S. MARK vii. 34.

THERE is one trait, and only one, in which, though it may be our necessity, and perhaps our privilege, yet it can scarcely be called our duty, to be like our great Master. And yet that trait is almost the largest in our Saviour's character—sadness of spirit. And the reason why we are not to copy our Saviour's sadness is evident: it is twofold; one, because He Himself is happy now, and the duty of being like Him as He is, is greater than the duty of being like Him as He was; so that we are most copying Christ when we are exceedingly happy. And the other reason is, that those sorrows of Jesus were the very materials out of which He was making the Church's joy; therefore to imitate them would be as if a man should think to copy a rainbow by painting a shower. For when we are sad, we are so far frustrating the sadnesses of Jesus. Thus it was doubtless quite right that Jesus should sigh when He opened the ears of the deaf man; but that deaf man when he was cured, would he have been right to sigh? Jesus groaned as he raised Lazarus, but it would ill become the rising Lazarus to groan. And we are the healed; and we are the liberated; and we are the risen ones;

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therefore it is as incumbent upon us to rejoice, as it was on Him to sow those tears, from which all our harvest of rejoicing comes.

And yet, have not some of you a feeling, that because Jesus was a man of sorrows, therefore it is right for us to be sorrowful, so right, that to be very happy seems almost a wrong done to Him, and a sign of a want of real discipleship?

In all our Saviour's sorrows—I do not enter into the mysteries of Gethsemane and Calvary—but in all the sorrows of our Saviour's life among men, there are two features characteristic, beautiful, and instructive.

Our Saviour's recorded sadnesses were all for others. They were either, as at Bethany, sympathy with others' griefs; or as when He encountered the opposition of the Sadducees, for our sins; the selfish element was unknown.

Again, His sorrow was never an idle sentiment. There is a great deal of useless, impassioned feeling in the world. Thousands are pained by the wickedness and misery they see around; they descant upon it; they can even weep when they speak of it—but it leads to no action. There is no effort; there is no self-sacrifice. It is almost poetry. It is but little more than the luxury of a tragedy. How different His! We never read of a sigh or tear of Jesus, but it immediately clothes itself into a benevolent word, or a benevolent work. Jesus groaned in spirit, and said, 'Where have ye laid him?' Again He groaned in spirit, and said, 'Take ye away the stone.' When He beheld the city, He wept over it, and He said, 'If thou hadst known.' He sighed; but with the sigh, He said, 'Ephphatha.'

I question whether, if we were in a right state, there would ever be a sorrow which did not throw itself into an action.

Some receive affliction passively and meditatively. They go into seclusion. They live in the past. They dwell much in their own hearts. Their sorrows isolate them. I do not say they are wrong.

But others at once go forth the more. They see in their trial a call to energy. They make their sorrow the very element of some enterprise for usefulness. They throw themselves into work, even in their tears. We must hold that this is a higher course—because this is the most like Jesus.

The sigh of Jesus, as He healed the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis, has been made to speak many languages, according to the varied habits of mind of those who have interpreted it. I will arrange them under four heads, and we may call them: the Sigh of Earnestness: the Sigh of Beneficence: the Sigh of Brotherhood: and the Sigh of Holiness. Let us note each: lest, by omitting one, we should miss our lesson.

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I. Because it says that 'looking up to heaven, He sighed,' some connect the two words, and account that the sigh is a part of the prayer, an expression of the intensity of the workings of our Lord's heart when He was supplicating to the Father. Like as even now, when the Holy Ghost, who is none other than the Spirit of Christ, prays in a man, He does it 'with groanings which cannot be uttered.' And we know well that vehemence, whether it be feeling or action, according to our present frame, doth vent itself in a sigh or groan; for the original word will equally bear to be translated sigh or groan.

And, if the Son of God sighed when He prayed, surely they have most of the spirit of adoption, not who offer up an apathetic form, but they who have such a sense of what communion with God is, and such an apprehension of the extent of their own necessity and misery, when they are on their knees, and of the vastness of the boon they are asking, that they bring their whole power to the great work, and cannot repress and hinder the strong emotion; and, in their very eagerness, exhaust themselves; till every tone and gesture speak of the struggle and ardour they feel within.

II. But it has been said again, that He who never gave us anything but what was bought by His own sufferings, so that every pleasure is a spoil purchased by His Blood, did now, by the sigh, and under the feeling that He sighed, indicate that He purchased the privilege to restore to that poor man the senses he had lost. And so it is true, as it is touching, that for every joy of ours there has gone up a woe of Christ's. Every moment's breath, I conceive (did we see it rightly), every better thought that ever goes through the mind, the sunbeam of real affection, every natural blessing we possess, we owe it to the sigh of Jesus. Had He not died, nothing would have been saved out of the utter ruin. Would we could never forget it, but the instant a joy falls, we trace it up to its true fount! What dignity would it give to all we have, what sacred sweetness, if we regarded the labouring bosom of Christ as the birthplace of every pleasure; and remembered that before that avenue of blessing was opened to us, there had been His sigh!

III. But furthermore, as I conceive of this, that sigh was the sigh of fellowship, the sigh of brotherhood. The scene before Him would be to His mind but a representative of thousands of thousands. His comprehensive thought, starting from that point, would travel on, till it embraced, in one dark union, all the miseries with which this earth is filled. And what, if one poor stricken one was healed, what was one drop taken out of that ocean? There that ocean lay in its blackness, its own incalculable depth, unsounded, unfathomable.

And yet the thought that what He could do was as nothing, did

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not stay His hand. He did not do (as we too often act) He did not do nothing, because He could not do all. He sighed, and He saved one! And that is true brotherhood. We live in a world where perfect happiness is impossible. For if we do not grieve, if our lot is as bright as God can make it, still every breath of air is tainted with anguish; the narrowest prospect has within it scenes of wretchedness; and the very foot cannot fall but it treads on sorrow. And when we think that what we see and feel is but a slight fraction of what is still unseen and unknown in this life, what shall we do? Take the humiliation, and shrink not from our duty. Feel with all, and do good to whom we may. Sigh, but work.

IV. But fourthly. All this still lay on the surface. Do you suppose that our Saviour's mind could think of all the physical evil, and not go on to the deeper moral causes from which it sprang? Doubtless in those closed ears and that chained tongue, He read, too plainly written, the fall, the distance, the degradation, the corruption, the universal defilement of our world. And where was the remedy to meet this disease—so wide and deadly? How long before that day when He should unclothe the gates of that great prison-house, and re-admit the exiled race back to their lost home. And till that day, what vast evil would Satan's empire have accomplished! What floods of iniquity would have rolled over the world, from generation to generation! How would the slime of the wicked one increase! What dark clouds of thick transgression would be going up every moment to grieve the Father's eye! And so, He sighed.

But, after all, what is worth sighing for, but sin? And observe, He only sighed. He was not angry. He sighed. That is the way in which perfect holiness looked on the sins of the universe. So, in the view of every fellow-creature's sin, don't you be angry, but be sorry for it. And, if your little child sin, let him see, not that you are angry, but sorry. If a man sin against you, let him see nothing but that he has made you very sorry. It will prevail where punishment will do nothing; where rebuke will do nothing. It is better than many words, for it is nearest to the mind of Jesus.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Loss of Christian Fellowship.

And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech.
S. MARK vii. 32.

CHRISTIAN Fellowship! The joy of life on earth, the foretaste of the life of heaven! And this miracle shows us how it may be lost, and the means by which it may be regained.

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I. The miracle is in several respects unique :

1. It is peculiar to S. Mark. This it shares with the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and the parable of the seed growing secretly.

2. There is a peculiar fulness of detail as to the treatment and apparent difficulty in the healing : we notice five distinct steps in it ; in this again it is similar to the healing of the blind man.

3. It seems to cause our Lord especial suffering : for we are told that 'He sighed,' or rather groaned.

II. The spiritual disease typified by the man's infirmity, the loss of fellowship with God and heaven :

1. The disease, deafness with its accompanying, and perhaps resulting, imperfection in speech, is a great hindrance to fellowship with man ; it is not so to the same extent with the blind ; they can talk and listen, and, indeed, their other senses only become more acute ; but the deaf are cut off from conversation with their fellow-men.

2. Our Lord groans at the man's condition, at the thought of what he is losing ; and the spiritually deaf and stammering, those who have lost the faculty of hearing God's voice, lost the power of communion with Him and with heaven, how sad is their state ! The world beyond is cut off from them ; they cannot realise S. Paul's words, 'Our conversation is in heaven' (Phil. iii. 20).

3. What this fellowship is :

a. Its beauty ; the harmony of the world as God meant it to be, beyond the discords of earth, to enter into the joyous life of heaven.

b. Its power ; union not only with one another, but with the whole body of Christ, the power of the Holy Ghost, the life-blood of the Church, circulating throughout the whole body.

c. Its helpfulness ; the sympathy which enables Christians to bear one another's burdens (Gal. vi. 2) to fight one another's battles, the help of sympathy, example, and united service of God.

III. The means by which the disease may be cured, and the lost fellowship be regained :

I. 'He took him aside from the multitude' (ver. 33), solitude with Jesus, going aside from the multitude, that in meditation we may hear His voice.

2. 'He . . . put his fingers into his ears . . . and touched his tongue' (ver. 35). Sacramental touch, not only hearing the voice of Jesus, but feeding on Him, fellowship in His life (1 S. John i. 3).

3. 'He charged them that they should tell no man' (ver. 36). Spiritual reserve as to what passes between Christ and our soul, we do not listen to the voice of Jesus that we may tell others, but that we may ponder the words in our hearts, and live by them.

A. G. MORTIMER.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Missionary Timidity.

2 KINGS ii. 12-15.



WE are apt perhaps to fancy that, to God's servants of old, to the Apostles and others who saw the miracles of Jesus and did the like themselves, or even to the prophets before His coming, who also did miracles and saw them done, faith must have been a far easier thing than it is to ourselves. And of course it would be wrong to deny that the sight of signs and wonders was to them an aid to faith, perhaps a necessary aid, a thing without which they could not have believed. But it does not follow that it put such an absolute constraint upon the mind as we often think it would, if we were to see such a miracle ourselves, nor that they could not help believing in God's truth when they saw God's works. If faith had been made so easy and natural to them it would scarcely have been faith; and it was by faith that they all were saved, both the patriarchs and prophets of the old covenant, and the Apostles and other early recipients of the gospel. We are blessed above the prophets and kings of old, our Lord Himself teaches us, for they desired to see the things which we see, and saw them not; and if we are less blessed than the Apostles, that is not because we see less than they did, but because we believe less—else if we had faith like theirs, we should possess the special blessing of those who have not seen but yet have believed.

I say this, that we may better understand the position of Elisha as described in the text, and the temptations he suffered under; the likeness of his state of mind and his temptations to what our own may very likely be. He had seen Elijah's miracles, and that sight was, as it proved, enough to sustain his faith under its trials; but very likely it made faith no easier to him than it is made to us by any of God's mercies that our own faith rest on—such as the stories of God's past miracles in Scripture, or the goodness of His common providence, or the continuing life of the Christian Church, and the gradual fulfilment of prophecy in its history and in that of the kingdoms of the world. We find it hard to believe that God is a living God, a God nigh at hand, not far from every one of us; and we, if we were asked why it is we find it so hard to believe, should

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very likely say that it is because we have never seen a miracle; because the living God, whom in spite of all we do believe in, has never vouchsafed to show us a visible sign of His life. But with Elisha also, as with us, it was a matter of faith and not of nature to know God as a living God, and a God with him; Elisha had seen many miracles, while none of us, I suppose, have seen one, but that did not alter the case.

For it is easy enough to believe that God may work in another man with another man, as He worked with His Prophets and Apostles—that He may have done such deeds by them as Elisha had seen and we had read of. What we find it so hard to believe is, that He should do such works in us, with us, or by us; and this point of faith was probably as hard to Elisha as to us. For one man's soul is quite out of the reach of another man's, even though they live together,—even though they know and love each other as well as these two great prophets did. Elijah was a prophet indeed: by what he did on Carmel, and what he spoke in Naboth's vineyard, and what he suffered by the brook Cherith and in the wilderness of Horeb, he had reconquered Israel for the Lord. Small wonder was it that such a man had such faith and grace that when he smote the waters they divided hither and thither to let him go over, as of old when smitten by Moses's rod. But what was Elisha? What guide had he to look to now that the Lord had taken away his master from his head? What strength to trust in, now that the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof was gone away, and he saw him no more? 'Where was the Lord God of Elijah?' The Lord God had been Elijah's God, but would He be his God too?

Some such doubts and fears as these found, we may believe, their utterance in the prophet's words in the text. But, if his words are the words of faith sorely tried, his acts are the acts of faith victorious: 'When he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.' Here was the Lord God of Elijah; He was with him after all,—able to part the waters before him as He had before Elijah himself. Faith had triumphed over its difficulties, and was the more glorious in proportion as these had been sorer. The hard thing he had asked for was done: the spirit of Elijah rested upon him in double measure, and in that spirit he went on to do the Lord's work, as Elijah had done before him.

I. So faith had its victory: so, if we are faithful, it will have still. We are tempted, sometimes, to think that God, who was of old time a very present help in trouble, is now a God far off, not one nigh at hand. We remember the works of the Lord, and call to mind His wonders of old time; but we do not go on, as the Psalmist did, to meditate upon all His works, and say, 'Who is so

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great a God as our God?' so great as our God is still? Practically, we think of God as if He were a man, and a dead man instead of the living God He is—as if He were a man who lived once, but is dead now, and gone to heaven. We do not doubt that He lives there, but we do not expect Him to rise again, to show any signs of life on earth. It is not only the dulness of our hearts that makes us take this view—the facts of the world's history seem to bear it out. 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' Must not the arm of the Lord be sleeping, that we never see it put on strength as in the days of old, as in the former years? Is it not true that God has gone to heaven, gone hence and is no more seen? Jesus has been gone from us a long time since first He came. He promised to come quickly, but He has not come yet. Is it strange if men have begun to ask, not only as Elisha did, 'Where is He?' but as S. Peter foretold that the scoffers of the last time would, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' Is it strange? or indeed we may say, is it unreasonable?

II. Look at the facts; they bear out those who ask the question—they encourage the doubters in their doubt. Of course we know that it is wrong to doubt, that such unbelief is only a temptation of the devil, but though it is wrong, can we say it is unreasonable? If we reason with the devil he has the best of the argument; if we want to overcome him, we must meet him, not by words, but by deeds. If we ask, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' and stand still, gazing up into heaven till we see a sign of Him, then verily, as He said Himself, 'there shall no sign be given unto this generation.' But if we wax bold in faith,—if we use the memory of the past, not as a mere memory but as a living reality, gathering up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and then going with it to do as Elisha did—then we shall find that the Lord God of Elijah is our God too; then the spirit of Elijah shall rest upon us—yea, the Spirit of glory and of God.

And as it is with Christian faith in general, so with the particular branch of Christian duty of which we now purpose to speak. No Christian who is in any way worthy of the name can doubt that the propagation of the gospel is a duty of the Church in every age; none of us, I hope, would venture in set terms to deny it. But it is possible that some of us may have felt the temptation which we see so often prevailing in our days, to think that no good can come of the efforts actually made to propagate it—to despair of the cause of God's Kingdom. We contrast what we see done by our missionaries with what was done by the Apostles; we contrast, perhaps, the men themselves with the Apostles themselves. We look for them to show an Apostle's spirit, to display, if not the same miraculous powers, at any rate the same inward graces, and the same gifts of wisdom and judgment. And if we see, or think we see, any shortcoming in these

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respects—if it is too plain that the average English missionary is a man not much better, nor any wiser, than ourselves, but rather the reverse—then we say, Where is the Lord God of Peter and Paul? How can we expect these commonplace men to do any good by their preaching? If we had Apostles to send to the heathen, we would be glad to send them; but these men are not Apostles, and why should we trouble ourselves to support them and the like of them?

So long as we ask such questions, we may go on asking them, and wait in vain for an answer. But if, instead of talking and wondering how any good thing can come out of us and our own country, we arise and do our duty in faith and zeal, then we shall find among ourselves the stuff that Apostles are made of; then we shall ask, and the Lord will shed upon us the Spirit that makes Apostles. As it is with us, so it doubtless was with them of old time in their own days, who are the admiration and the despair of ours. The devil was always ready to taunt those holy men with their inferiority to the Saints who had gone before them; but they did not pay heed to the devil, but to Him who had promised, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’

W. H. SIMCOX.

At the Spring of the Waters.

He went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there.

2 KINGS ii. 21.

I. ‘THE spirit of Elijah,’ they said, ‘doth rest on Elisha.’ It was true. Yet who is not struck with the difference, with the contrariety, between them? And who does not trace in this contrast the manifoldness, the flexibility, the appropriateness too, of God’s working, as the Book of God has delineated, as the Church of God has exemplified it?

At first sight the succession is a deterioration. The glow, the rush, the genius, the inspiration, the awe, the prowess, seems to have died with the master. The inhabitant of the desert, the man of mystery and apparition, the ‘enemy’ of kings, the slayer of prophets, the reformer and iconoclast, is gone—the departure of one piece with the life—wind and fire ministering still—bearing away from earth, in confessed yet glorious failure, the man of whom earth had shown itself unworthy. There remains a *man*—a dweller in cities and houses—living the common life, ‘eating and drinking’ with princes and neighbours, presiding over educational homes, the counsellor of his countrymen in peril, their comforter in trouble, their referee in controversy, their powerful mediator, their self-forgetting friend. Viewed in one aspect, no position was ever more level, no work more human,

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no office less heroic. Yet it is upon this life that 'a double portion' of Elijah's spirit rested. The disciple's life, not the master's, is the 'shadow cast before' of a life above man's. If the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias, it was 'Eliseus the prophet' who dimly prefigured Christ.

The very record of Elijah's history should have prepared us for this juster estimate. In the great vision at Horeb—the second proclamation on that spot, of the glory which is the name of the Lord—it was not in the wind, it was not in the fire, it was not in the earthquake, it was in 'the still small voice,' that the real Presence, the very Deity, was manifested to the longing and fainting spirit. It is so everywhere, and in all things. Influence ranks essentially above power, and tranquillity is evermore a condition of grace. It is one of the high objects of Scripture to correct man's judgments upon insignificance and greatness. When Elisha follows Elijah, the passing generation counts it a descent and a decline, looks back with regret to the stormier scenes amidst which, and the grander agencies in which, the prophet of the past exercised his ministry, and returns with dissatisfaction, almost with complaining, to the human, the common, the neighbourly life, which is all that remains to it of a predecessor's magnificence. And yet, all the time, just because that second life is human, touches our own at all points, and is exercised not in 'great matters' which are 'too high for it,' but in a contact and a converse which 'refrains and keeps it low,' it is the truer and the more Christ-like and the more God-like of the two. And it is in the discernment of a divine hand, in whose transitions from a past to which distance lends enchantment, to a present in which there is neither illusion nor explanation, that a large part of earth's trial, probation, and discipline lies, for some of the Church's noblest spirits, to whom the old is consecrated by pious association, and the new comes harsh and bleak and unlovely for the lack of it. Yet Christ is in each as each is; and the dweller in the age that is not must miss Him.

There is one point peculiar to this parable, and that is, the stress laid upon 'the spring of the waters.' 'The water is naught, and the ground barren.' Man, then, might have been satisfied to deal with the symptoms, with the stream, and with the ground. But God's prophet goes to the spring of the waters, and casts the healing salt in there. There must be 'a new cruse,' something with which man has not intermeddled; that is one necessity; and then, the casting in must be at the spring, at the source, if God is to say, as the prophet here reports Him, 'I have healed these waters.'

When the miracle is thus interpreted into parable, we see how infinite may be its applications. It is the parable of thoroughness.

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It bids us go to the spring of our disease, and never rest till the antidote is at work there. It would have us look, in all our life—the national, the ecclesiastical, the educational, as well as the personal—first for the salt and then for the spring; so that, the waters being healed at the source, the issue may be no longer ‘death or barrenness.’

II. There are two aspects of our earthly being, each impressive, each admonitory. The one is that which represents it as a multitude, the other is that which represents it as a unit. The one bids us to number our days, to make each a little life, to feel how many they are, and how God has made each one both complete and capacious and responsible. This is that Scripture figure of the walk for which the inmate of the home starts each morning, and from which he returns at evening to his rest and to his dwelling. This is that view of life which is good for the Christian man; walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; fearing no evil, because ‘his time is in God’s hands,’ and he is dwelling, every moment of it, in the sweet sunshine of His countenance. To walk before God in holiness and righteousness all the days till his change come; this is the heritage of God’s servants, and it is their sufficient admonition to possess it.

But the Word which speaks not in vain, and multiplies not figures in superfluity, has another metaphor for life, which calls it not a walk but a journey. From the birth to the death there is movement, there is progression, somewhence and somewhither. There is no returning at nightfall to the quarters left at the sunrising. The life is making for a terminus and a destination. It has a plan, conscious or unconscious. It has a scheme and a system, known to itself or unknown. It is not a multitude of lives, it is one life. God sees it as a whole. God can write its epitaph—‘He did good,’ or, ‘He did evil,’ not both, and it needs but to inscribe the name, and the mother’s name, and the length of the course, and the place of the burial.

The life is a unit life, and this is what gives significance, gives solemnity, to its starting. We are here at the spring of the waters; and here, therefore, must a more than prophet’s hand cast in the salt.

There is a continuity, there is a unity, in each life, but it may be, once at least, it is enough here to say, once sharply, decisively, splendidly broken. We enter into no mysticism, we trench upon no disputed ground between school and school, between party and party, between church and church, when we recognise as a fact and as a phenomenon the possibility, proved in thousands of instances, of a new life in the soul. Call it by what name you will, provided that

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you mean by it this, a change—heart-deep and therefore life-wide—such as brings God into everything, as a Father, a Saviour, and a Sanctifier.

This change may be swift, or it may be gradual. It may be due to one influence, or to many influences; some of them far in the past, some of them undefined and even unconscious. It has as many varieties as exist in the resources of a God whose way is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not seen. But experience has shown that youth is the point most favourable, most helpful, in regard to the experience on which we dwell. The piety of childhood is beautiful, but proverbially evanescent. There must be, if the word must have place in things divine, some knowledge of good and evil, some acquaintance with sorrow and sin, some practical proof of the weakness of resolution, some protracted search of the soul after a still unrealised strength, before the helm of the being is finally set heavenward, before a man can echo the Samaritan testimony, ‘Now I believe, not because of thy saying, for I have heard for myself, and know.’

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Elijah's Farewell to Elisha.

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. 2 KINGS ii. 9.

THE assumption of Elijah the prophet into heaven is one of those incidents in the Bible history which takes possession of the imagination in the earliest years of childhood, while it also suggests problems of the highest interest as long as we can read our Bibles or think at all. And in contemplating the narrative the eye at once rests upon the figure of Elisha. Ever since his call at Abel-meholah, Elisha had been generally in attendance on the great prophet, and thus the courtiers of Jehoshaphat describe him as ‘Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.’ Elisha seems to have lived at Gilgal, not the familiar spot to us, down in the Jordan valley where Joshua, in an earlier age, had set up the twelve stones, but another Gilgal on the watershed in Ephraim, from which the two prophets went down by a gentle slope towards Bethel. Elijah hinted, it seems, by some special intimation, what was going to happen; and, whether from personal humility, or out of consideration for his attached follower, he desired Elisha to remain at Gilgal while he himself went on alone to Bethel. Elisha refused to leave him, using an adjuration of peculiar solemnity to describe his attachment. The two went on to Bethel. Bethel was one of those Jewish

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towns at which there was a college, or society of young men training by prayer and study for the prophetic ministry, and known generally as 'the sons of the prophets'; and Elijah probably desisted, by his words, or by his presence, to console and to encourage these candidates for his own sacred office, before leaving them for ever. They, too, had been informed of the expected event; they asked Elisha abruptly if he was prepared for it. Elisha could not bear the question. He knew what was coming only too well. The matter was too grave, too sacred, for words. Again Elijah bade Elisha remain. He himself was inspired to go on to Jericho. Again Elisha refused, in the words and with the vehemence of his former refusal, and accordingly they walked on together some twelve or thirteen miles down the valley to Jericho. At Jericho there is another prophetic training college, and the report of Elijah's approaching departure had spread here also, and Elisha, as the person chiefly affected, was cross-questioned by the students as he had been cross-questioned before, and, as before, he answered that he knew what was before him, but could not speak of it. Would not Elisha, Elijah asked for the last time, would he not remain at Jericho? The request was met with the same peremptory refusal, and the two walked on to the Jordan, while fifty young men from the prophetic school in Jericho ascended the heights behind the town which commanded the lower part of the Jordan valley, to see what would happen. And then the two travellers walked on together across the sandy plain. They paused for a moment on the river-bank. Elijah must cross to the side of his native Gilead. He smites the waters; they divide hither and thither; the two pass on dry ground. And then, as both stand together on the eastern bank, they feel that the end has come. Only a few words passed, as when men know that the time may be counted by minutes, when they know that they have to compress into a sentence or two the meaning of a life. 'Ask,' said the departing prophet to his disciple, 'ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee.' Elijah speaks as a man who has power with God, and Elisha answers accordingly. 'I pray thee that a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.' Elisha asks not that his spiritual endowments as a prophet might be twice as great as those of his master, but that he might receive twice as large a portion of Elijah's spirit as any other of the sons of the prophets. He asked it, we may be sure, not with any such poor object as the enhancement of his personal power, but that he may better do his appointed work; and, although he is told that he has asked a hard thing, he is told also that it will be granted if he actually sees his master in the act of departure. 'If thou seest me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but, if not, it shall not be so.' Then, and, as it

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appears, quite suddenly, the end came. It came to pass, that, as they still went on and talked, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder. And Elijah went up by a storm into heaven; and Elisha saw it, and cried, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more.'

Now, those who try to govern their thoughts by God's revelation, instead of trying to mould revelation so as to suit their changing thoughts, will take this narrative as it stands. The three days' search for the body of Elijah, which by Elisha's permission was made by the fifty young students from Jericho, was not more successful than some of the literary excursions of modern writers, in quest of a natural explanation of what Scripture treats, beyond all doubt, as a preternatural occurrence akin to the translation of Enoch in the early patriarchal age. Such an occurrence is, at least, in keeping with the life which it closes, and those who believe that this is the primary question which underlies all others, those who believe that the physical order of this universe may be, and occasionally is, subordinated to the interests of its moral order, will not be startled even at this distinguished honour put upon one of the greatest of the servants of God in an age of widespread apostasy from truth and duty.

But, not to dwell too much at length on the supernatural side of the matter, let us observe that this event brings before us, although surrounded with unusual circumstances, the departure of a great servant of God from the world of sense; and whenever or wherever such an event as that happens, it is one of solemn import. Each such emigrant seems to echo Elijah's injunction, 'Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.' And a great deal may depend on our witnessing such an event. Christ is nowhere preached so powerfully, it has been truly said, as He is preached from a Christian death-bed. Let us try, at any rate, to understand the solemnity which is inseparable from any event of the kind.

I. We see here, first of all, that which is involved more or less in every such occasion, the parting of friends. It was no new tie which bound Elijah to Elisha. Elisha owed everything that a good man holds dear to the prophet of Gilead; and hence it was that when Elijah felt his end to be near, and wished to be alone, the strong passionate love of Elisha persistently follows him from one stage to another of the weary journey which ends beyond the Jordan, just as friends will watch by a bedside unwearingly, from one stage to another, through weeks, through months, through years of a last illness, and the last command of the prophet addressed to his follower was the language of tender and devoted friendship. 'Ask

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what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.' To Elijah that solemn moment was, we may be sure, a great deal else, but he speaks of it as removal from the companionship of Elisha.

Friendship is one of the most beautiful products of the natural life of man. It is the tie of moral or of mental kinship as distinct from the tie of blood, and of the two it is sometimes the strongest. 'There is a friend,' said Solomon, 'that sticketh closer than a brother.' Solomon, no doubt, remembered the mutual love of his own father and Jonathan, an attachment which no family rivalry, no dark anticipations about the future, could imperil. The highest effort of friendship is referred to by our Lord when He is anticipating, no doubt, His own awful and voluntary sacrifice. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' But this was understood after their measure among the best and noblest of the heathen, and pagan history has its splendid narratives of self-sacrifice inspired by friendship, and friendship was a subject for discussion and study, and filled a much more considerable place in the writings and conversation of the better sort of heathens than it does among ourselves. Treatises on friendship, on its nature, on its obligations, on its spirit, on its advantages, were not at all uncommon among literary people in Greece and Rome. The subject seemed somehow to yield a special sort of satisfaction to their moral natures. And Christianity has been reproached, more than once, with having somewhat thrown into the shade so attractive and so fruitful an element in the moral and social life of man. The truth is that, in presence of a law of universal charity which, however little it may be obeyed, is present to, and weighs upon, the Christian conscience, it seems a poor and an inadequate thing to offer a whole heart to any one human being; and, moreover, in doing so, there is, no doubt, as ordinary friendship goes, a real risk of selfishness, the selfishness which jealously exacts an equivalent for all that it offers, and is ready to be disappointed, or wounded, on the least signs of a want of reciprocity. And friendship of this kind, need I say it, is not a fruit of the law of love. It springs from an opposite principle of self-gratification, and therefore, with the advance of Christianity, the cultivation of a friendship on precisely the principle which governs the cultivation of a garden, namely, with a view to some return, has been naturally discredited.

But there have been Christian friendships, like that of Basil of Cæsarea and Gregory Nazianzen during their student days at Athens, in which all that was best in the old classical model is preserved, and is transfigured by the new law and life of Christ in which love is strong without being jealously restricted to a single object, without losing aught of its purity, or of its disinterestedness. Such walking

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in the house of God as friends, such friendship as this, contracted beneath the eye, and sanctified by the presence, of the All Holy, is a spiritual agency of the greatest power. The act by which two souls make, as it were, their stock of thought and feeling common property, so that each draws upon the resources of the other until the mutual influence is, at times, so powerful that soul seems to blend almost indistinguishably with soul, this, it is obvious, cannot but exert a decisive influence upon a man's whole destiny; and therefore few acts in a young man's life are more important in their consequences than the choice of his friends. '*Noscitur a sociis*' ('a man is known by his companions') is only true with limitations. We may associate with those whom we do not quite like, but whom we hope to benefit. But '*Noscitur ab amicis*' ('A man is known by his friends'), if the proverb exists, would be much nearer the mark, since the character of a man's friends is an index, if not of what he himself is, at least of his governing tastes and dispositions. And the parting of real friends is consequently one of those tragical experiences of the human soul which cause far more suffering than any pain of the body, which leave wounds, not unfrequently, that bleed till death. It is especially the case when the friendship is dissolved by the misconduct of one of the friends. It is also the case, although in quite another sense, when a friendship becomes no longer possible, owing to some serious divergence of conviction on what are felt to be points of the first importance. Nothing in his whole life caused greater pain to the late Mr. Keble than his renunciation of the friendship which from early years had bound him to Arnold; but the time came when he felt that he had to choose between the friend of his boyhood whom he dearly loved, but whose principles as it appeared to him were becoming less and less reconcilable with truths of the highest moment and the eternal Friend above. Far less painful is a parting brought about, not by any human will, but by the course of God's providence, as when a man stands by his friend's death-bed, and knows that in a few hours the two will be in two different spheres of being; and yet how solemn a moment is that, how full it is of inevitable pain, of inevitable awe! Granting that that scene is irradiated by the highest Christian hopes, that, almost visibly to faith, the Lord comforts the sufferer lying sick upon his bed, and makes all his bed in his sickness; granting that there is all that the dying need, prayers, repentance, sacraments, the felt presence and pardon of the divine Redeemer; granting that the last moments are a spiritual triumph, and that Elijah is taken up in a chariot and horses of fire into heaven—the fire of a consuming charity for God and man—yet to reflect that that long companionship, that all those years of mutual influence, of common opportunities, of common dangers, of common struggles,

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failures, victories, are over, to recall not merely the joys of friendship, but its inevitable sorrows, the hasty expression of opinion, the easy acquiescence in mistakes, the cowardice of affection as well as its passion, and to know that all that chapter of life is for ever closed, this is one of the most solemn experiences of the human soul on earth; and if, before he is taken from us, a dying friend can teach us the responsibilities as well as the privileges of friendship he will have done us a service of the very highest and most sacred kind.

II. For we see here, too, the last act of a great life. It is not perhaps what we should have expected from a man like Elijah the Tishbite. A last solemn denunciation of the house of Ahab, a last punishment threatened or executed upon the Baal-worshippers, a word of warning which might rouse Israel, before it was too late, from the dead—this, we think, would have been more in character. But, in truth, the greatest and the strongest men are not unfrequently the simplest and the tenderest; and Elijah, whose life had been passed in vehement speech and in heroic action—Elijah is thinking, just like any humble peasant, of what he can best do for his, as yet, undistinguished follower. ‘Ask what I shall do for thee before I am taken away from thee.’

And—mark it well—all that had preceded in Elijah’s career led up to that incident as to the very crown and flower of his life. His bold denunciation of Ahab’s apostasy, his fearless appeals to Obadiah and then to Ahab during the famine, his encounter with the prophets of Ashtaroah and Baal on Mount Carmel, his retirement in despondency to Horeb, his meeting with Ahab in judgment for the murder of Naboth, his prediction of their master’s death to the messengers of Ahaziah, his defiance of the soldiers who were sent to take him—these are the more prominent acts of a life which exhibits fiery zeal, indomitable courage, which triumphs over the greatest difficulties, which is rendered pathetic by the deepest sorrows.

And now he knew, and others knew, that the end had come, and the last act for which all others had prepared remained. It was an act of pure unselfishness, of simple thought for the needs of another. A death-bed does two things. It puts the finishing stroke on life, and it yields a revelation of character. When there is nothing more to be looked for here, men are real and simple, if simplicity and reality are ever possible for them at all. There have been, it is said, actors upon the scaffold, but, for the credit of our common humanity, I believe that they are few and far between. As a rule, dying men act and speak in accordance with the strongest and deepest motives that have governed them through life, or that govern them at the moment. To note the last act, to hear the last words, of a good

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man is, therefore, a solemn privilege which ought to redouble our zeal for all that has made him what he is.

III. But, lastly, and chiefly, the solemnity of the scene consists in this, that Elijah is visibly about to take his departure for another world. 'Before I be taken away from thee.' Elijah was, indeed, taken in body as well as in spirit. His translation reminds us that death is not only the conclusion of one stage of being: it is the door through which we enter upon another, and the light which already streams through the openings illumines the present scene with a strange interest and awe; for it has been observed, sometimes reproachfully, sometimes in the way of praise, that, as a matter of fact, Christianity has immensely enhanced in men's minds the significance of death,—that, whereas great heathen writers and teachers have endeavoured to persuade men to pass through life with careless light-heartedness, making the best of the enjoyments of the hour, and leaving the stern possibilities of the future out of sight till they really are upon us, Christianity has succeeded to the duty of that Macedonian slave who had to remind his royal master, morning after morning, 'Philip, remember that thou art human!' And this witness is true. Christianity has made us men think with more awe of each single death, by pointing out to us unflinchingly what death really means,—that it is not merely, or chiefly, the dissolution of an animal organisation, but that it is the departure of a living spirit, whose probation is at length over, into the eternal world. It is the survival, the certain, the necessary survival, of the soul of man, which, in Christian eyes, gives to death its tremendous meaning. If death were, in reality, only the first step towards resolving a human body into its chemical elements,—if, while the force which had invigorated, and the atoms of matter which had composed, that body were preserved under other forms, all else had, like streams of morning cloud, melted into the infinite azure of the past, then, no doubt, we might rightly look upon a dying man with easy composure—with the composure with which we should regard the fall of a ripe apple from its parent tree. But everything—let me insist on it—everything depends upon the question whether, in death, man dies as a whole, or whether there is a real, important, or, rather, the most important, part of his body which necessarily survives him.

Few things are stranger in the history of human thought than the vehemence with which materialism from time to time re-asserts itself, as though men were afraid of the true dignity of their nature, and sought to bury deep in the folds of matter that higher element of life which makes them what they are. They are by no means the highest minds in the ancient world who tried to assist men to think that they were nothing but aggregations of

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atoms, after all. The better heathen, like Plato, knew that such a doctrine was, in itself, false, and that it was, in its effects upon our common human nature, degrading. The life of the soul after death was no simple discovery of Christianity. It was a truth of natural religion which men perceived as soon as they thought steadily about what went on within themselves. And Christianity only taught men more clearly, and with new evidence of its truth, what was already a familiar belief among the best and highest minds.

The doctrine which denies that there is any spiritual element in man, which survives death, ordinarily rests itself upon two propositions, each of which may be shown to be inaccurate.

There is, first of all, the assumption that all a man's knowledge comes to him through the activity of his senses. Now, in point of fact, just as many perceptions of our senses elicit no thought at all, so many thoughts present themselves every day, every hour of our lives, which cannot by any means whatever be traced to the mechanical action of sense. Thought of a certain kind is extraordinarily active during dreams,—that is to say, when the functions of the senses are altogether in suspense. And, again, memory—that is, thought acting upon the past—is independent, from the nature of any present activity of sense. The substance of the brain is said to be renewed in twelve years at the most; but we remember—and often the more vividly as we get older—scenes, personages, events, of forty or fifty years ago; and here, therefore, there is a capacity independent of and beyond the immediate action of the senses. And observe that the existence of this capacity is just as much a matter of experience as anything we see, or hear of, or touch. This, I say, is a matter which every man may test for himself.

And he can test the second of the two propositions or assumptions to which I have referred with equal facility, namely, that all mind is merely an effect of matter, so that, if the brain be irritated in a certain way, thought must necessarily follow. Why if this were true, the orang-outangs ought to be great thinkers. Their brains, as we are constantly reminded, differ from those of men only in a lesser degree of intricacy, and in a certain peculiarity of form. The weight and size of their brain is substantially the same. Why then, I ask, do not the anthropoid apes produce the same ideas as man? Why have they never constructed a language? Why do not they even sing? The more you insist upon the similarity of their brain-substance to ours, the more obvious it becomes that man can only compass results so astonishingly beyond them in virtue of a higher something that acts upon, but is independent of, his brain—a something that is himself; the more it becomes obvious that he speaks and thinks because speech and thought are not the product

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of any structural peculiarity of his organs, but of the self-conscious principle within him which controls them. If an orang-outang could distinguish between itself and its sensations; if it could, for one moment, project its thought from itself as we men do whenever we think properly at all, it, too, would instinctively talk. Its throat would present no mechanical difficulty. Man does make this distinction, and therefore if man is born deaf and dumb he can be taught to express his thought upon his fingers, because, in Bible language, man is not merely a living animal, but a spirit as well; and in man's power of consciously reflecting upon his existence, and of distinguishing between his central self and his thoughts and his acts, lies his radical distinctness from the very highest brutes. And thus, I say, that we are spirits is a fact of consciousness; and as we observe that our life, as spirits, although most intimately bound up with our bodily organs, does not depend on them, so we reasonably infer that it will not perish with them.

We do not need a voice from heaven to suggest to us that our whole being will not be destroyed at the moment when our heart shall cease to beat. But considering the pressure of the things of sense, considering the indecision with which we men habitually lay hold on the unseen if it be not certified to us from without, we are mercifully—we are altogether—lifted up by the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour out of this region of high probabilities that commend themselves to the reason, in favour of our immortality; into that of certainties which are known to be such to faith. And this is why it is so solemn a thing to be with any man who is about to take his departure for the eternal world, especially to be with a dying Christian. He is yet, it may be, fully conscious, but upon his face we read the sentence of death. Soon, we say to ourselves—in a few hours, it may be sooner—soon he will have seen that world from which men do not return. He will have entered on that stage of existence which awaits us all, of which we know little except its reality. At such times the unseen sheds a new, an awful, a blessed light often (God be thanked) upon the scene. We stand, like Elisha, close, it may be, to one who has already more to offer us than have common men. 'What shall I do for thee?' is the language of those eyes which follow us so inquiringly round the sick-room, of those lips which would but cannot speak. 'What shall I do for thee before I be taken from thee?'

Surely we, too, must ask for a double portion, if it may be, of the character of Christ's dying servant. Much is given at such times to those who have the courage to ask for much, to those who watch with the eye of faith for the chariots of fire and the horses of fire on which strong and loving souls are carried up from a bed of suffering

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into the rest of Paradise. But in any case we must ask for a deeper sense of the meaning and responsibilities of life and of the world which is to follow it. We must ask for pardon and peace if, as yet, we have it not, through that atoning blood which was shed to preserve us, too, body and soul, unto everlasting life. Even Elisha, devoted as he already was, was another man after witnessing the translation of Elijah. And there are scenes in every life which ought to send us back to work and to duty with twice our previous sense of the importance of what we have to do in this stage of our existence, and with a new and deeper value for those heavenly aids which enable us, if we will, to do it.

H. P. LIDDON.

Are you Awake?

(Sermon for Children.)

The child is not awaked. 2 KINGS iv. 31.

MANY of you are, or have been, quite as dead, in the truest sense of that word, as was the boy who lay still and white in the prophet's chamber at Shunem, and need to be awaked quite as much as he did. I am not now speaking to the very little ones among you. No doubt even in the youngest of you there are evil germs which may unfold themselves by and bye, until you too die, or fall asleep, to God and goodness. No doubt even you often do wrong, and know that it is wrong while you do it. But, for all that, I do not call you dead if God is near and present to you, if you think of Him as your Father, if you are sorry when you do wrong, if you are quickly and easily moved to love, admire, and imitate whatsoever is right and brave and noble. It is a mere libel, or a mere mistake, to call those dead whose hearts are still so sensitive to every spiritual and kindly touch, to whom the heavenly world is still so close and true and attractive that their angels stand nearest the Throne, and of whom the Saviour Himself has said, 'Of such is the Kingdom of heaven.' No: even the narrow and austere Jewish rabbis did not call a boy 'a son of the law,' and hold him to be fully responsible for himself, until his thirteenth birthday; and even that was one, if not two years, earlier than the Jewish law required, and I am not going to be more harsh and stern with you than they were.

I. But there are some of you, many of you, who have lived long enough, and have long enough been knocked about in the little world of school, to have grown somewhat dull and dead. God is not so real, and He is not so much, to you as He was. You are not so ashamed of doing wrong as you were: it may be even that there are some things which you know your masters or parents would think

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wrong that you take a foolish pride in hiding from them. Perhaps you are even drawn to do things simply because you are forbidden to do them. Perhaps you are not really sorry, but hard and defiant, when you are found out, though you still go through the forms of penitence. Perhaps you eagerly do things when you are not seen, which you would not dare to do if you knew that any eye was upon you. Perhaps you are getting greedy, selfish, hard to please; or, like Gehazi, covetous of the good things which others have, but you have not.

And then, some of you, if you are not dead, are at least fast asleep. Your spiritual faculties and affections rust unused, or they are seldom used. You are dreaming, and pursuing dreams. For what we often call 'the real world,' the world outside us, is not truly the real one: but the world within it, and behind it, and beyond it. Thousands of men pass into this outward world, and pass out of it, every day; and they can only take with them what they have stored up within themselves. So that it is this inner world which is the real world to us, the world in which alone true and enduring treasures are to be found. And if any of you think the outside world—in which you only stay for a few years at most—to be the real one, and are living only or mainly for that, while the inward and spiritual world, in which you are to abide for ever, is unreal and unattractive to you;—what can we say of you except that you are fast asleep, and do not see things as they are, and mistake dreams for realities and realities for dreams? You have eyes, but they are not open. There are faculties in you capable of apprehending the true realities, but as yet they are not in exercise. Like the Shunamite's son, who was both asleep and dead, you need to be awaked; you need to be quickened unto life.

II. How are you to know whether you are alive and awake, or asleep and dead? In a hundred different ways—such ways as these. If you are at school, and set yourself to learn your lessons well and to get on fast—as I hope you all do—you may have very different motives for doing your duty in school. You may care only to beat your class-fellows, to stand above them, to get on in your little world and be looked up to: and if that be your aim or motive, it is a selfish one, and you are asleep and dead to the true motives and aims by which you ought to be inspired. But if you are eager to learn because you wish to do your duty, and to fit yourselves for larger duties by and bye, because you want to become wiser, better, more useful, or because you want to please your parents and show that you are not unmindful of how much they have done for you, or because you want to please God and to prove that you thankfully remember how much He has done for you and given you, then you are

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alive and awake: for, now, your motives reach up out of and beyond this present world, which will soon pass away, and you are trying to prepare yourselves for any life, or any world to which it may please God to call you.

And, lastly, some of you are growing up into men and women, and have to go out into the world to earn your daily bread. Are you diligent, thoughtful, eager to advance? Why, so far, well. But you may be diligent, observant, quick to seize every advantage and opportunity, mainly because you hate work and hope to get free from it the more quickly; or because you want to lay by money, to get rich, to make a fortune; or because you are bent on distinction, reputation, applause. And, in that case, you are dead and asleep; you are not alive and awake to the best things, the most satisfying, the most enduring. For this life, for which alone you are living, will soon be over and the riches which have wings soon use them and fly away. On the other hand, you may be diligent, thoughtful, quick to seize occasion as it rises, because it is your duty, because you want to train and accomplish yourselves, because you long to be of some use in the world, and in every world, that may come after it, because you love God and hold His law to be the true law of life, His peace its true end. And, in that case, you are alive and awake. If you should die to-night, our Father would not have sorrowfully to say of you, 'The child is not awake,' and feel that He must put you into hard and painful conditions which will rouse and sting you to a sense of all that you have lost and thrown away. And if you should live to be never so old, still all your life will be a useful and happy preparation for the better life to come.

And now that you know how to answer this question, let me once more press the question upon you, 'Are you awake?' Let me beg you to ask it of yourselves, until you can reply, 'Yes, thank God, we are awake; we are really alive: and, therefore, we shall never die.'

S. COX.

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V OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Catholic Church.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could ^{WE} nothing cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing should be impossible unto you. S. MATTHEW xvii. 19. 20.



THE first intention of the Church is to create a saintly life. Her second is to influence the multitude for good. In all systems of ethical philosophy, I suppose, the same order is observed. The perfect state is first in idea, though it may be second in time. It is thus that the paradox of Aristotle is proved to be reasonable, when he says that the political man is first, the individual second. As to priority in time, in the natural world the theory of evolution postpones the perfection of the creature till an indefinite and almost interminable period to give room for development; but if the gospel history of our Lord Jesus Christ be true, do you think we have any evidence there against the statement that the creation of the saints is the primary intention of the Church, and that not in idea only but also in time?

Christianity began with the person of Christ. In Him was seen the perfect life from the beginning. It is true, and a blessed proof of His real Manhood it is, that He 'increased in wisdom and in favour with God and man.' He was the Ideal Man from the moment of His Incarnate Presence in the world. Saintliness in Him was visible to angels and men from His infancy. Then His home became the Church of the saints—of Elizabeth, Zacharias, John the Baptist, Joseph, the blessed Mother of Jesus; and the world knows this to be the Holy Family. Then, again, His consecration to public life was given by the good pleasure of the Father, who from heaven spoke to Him with a welcome and joy with which He could only address the holiest. His first act was the maintenance of a perfect innocence against the tempter, resistance to whom proves the character of the saint. His first teaching was the counsel of perfection—a rule for engraving the lines of ideal character on the practice of the living men and women walking upon the earth in those sublime beatitudes which define a purity and perfection beyond the dreams of theorists;

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and, above all, when He came to reform society and to convert the nations, and to make a disposition for the Kingdom of heaven, He chose a few to be near Him and He gave His mind and a large portion of His time to the training and perfecting them as saints. This is the standard He sets before them—not activity in world-bettering, not the energy of eloquence, not the wealth of knowledge, which to the wise and prudent of the world is above all price, but the attractive genius of sanctity. These are His definition of their high character and work as it is to be. ‘Ye are the salt of the earth ;’ ‘the light of the world ;’ ‘a city set upon a hill.’ They are to be judges of the world, the few who find the narrow way, moralists who are to support the laws of ancient ethics in purity, forgiveness, patience, charity, self-sacrifice, in the heroic life of suffering, in justice to the poor, in hope for the degraded, in antagonism to the rich and powerful when they tyrannise over the good, in command over the resources of the spiritual world, in expelling evil spirits, in representing God and justifying His rule of mercy and of judgment. They were to reign as kings and serve as priests far beyond the capacity and the scope of the very greatest whom the world had known. Thus was the Church launched on her career to prove that her first intention was to create saints.

I. But, then, beside the personal authority of Christ, and the signature impressed by His example, we have the reasonableness of this principle, in reference to three points. First, no other principle of Christian action is adequate to the claim of human life. Mediocrity cannot meet the demand ; no graduated scale of goodness which fails of perfection will satisfy man’s desire. Had the human race one voice for the utterance of its needs, it would not cry for a moderate Christianity ; conscious of its high lineage and noble destiny, it speaks in this high tone when the critic challenges it to declare its function : ‘To this end have I been born, and to this end have I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.’ And if the Pilates of the world ask, ‘What is truth ?’ will humanity answer, ‘Mediocrity’ ? No. A conscience will never satisfy which has life enough to cause unrest but fails in power to create peace and to give liberty for happy work. Man hath memory and can recall the first intention of his creation. Man has imagination, and can climb great heights of dignity. He will stay with his Saviour in the nether world, while He eats with the publican and ministers to the sinner ; but he will rise with Him in turn to the summit of the mountain, and feel in his amazement that it is good for him to be there. One life alone is commensurate with the capacity and want of man—the life of the saint. The saints are not prodigies in the world ; they are the normal expression of the natural life of the

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redeemed. None else can bear true witness to the truth of humanity.

It follows, then, to look now to ourselves. If the Church in any age or country has no message to the saints, she leaves the deepest springs in man's nature unopened; she fails to elicit his highest faculties; his purest affections are unvisited, his best happiness marred, his liberty cramped; he is disfranchised of his birthright, robbed of his inheritance. Have you ever known how a young man, beginning to feel his power and conscious of great ability, will look back on the school, or college, or teacher which, in those first precious years of his education, failed altogether to do him justice, snubbed him, gave him no stimulus to higher energy, set nothing before him but a pallid mediocrity? What soreness, and stifled resentment, and bitterness, and despair works in that man's mind as he thinks what he has lost by the small-mindedness of another! And in that great day when all the works of the Church shall pass away and be as nothing, and the generations of men stand before the Righteous Judge, and judgment begin, as it will, at the house of God, think what will be the sentence on the Church of any particular age or place in Christendom which has been proud of its world-bettering and its respectability, but has failed to cast out evil spirits from the suffering as only saints can cast them out, and has given her mind to covering a larger surface at the cost of neglecting her first duty—to do justice to the noblest capacities of her children and to educate them into saints. Such chastening thoughts as these will not make us, with all our blessings, less faithful in the use of them, less humble, less wise.

II. Here let me pass to another point which fixes in our minds the reasonableness of our blessed Lord's intention that the Church should be the creator of saints. God's way from the beginning hath been to work from the few to the many—to act upon the many by the few. For instance, God is a covenant God. The mercies of God are covenanted mercies. Revelation tells us nothing, however we may choose to speculate, of the uncovenanted mercies. Now, a covenant implies selection; it presumes the gathering together of a few. Again, nothing is plainer than the historical fact that Christ Jesus in His ministry began to elect a few and to educate them, as has been said already, in the highest forms of saintliness. In the foreground of the gospel there are two classes of people broadly defined—the teachers and the taught, the disciples and the multitude. Now, how can you justify, by the laws of reasonable prudence, Christ's method of reforming the world—His method being the exercise of personal influence for three short years in a narrow strip of land on the borders of an inland sea, and then retiring out of sight of the world in what the world would call shame and disappointment? How can

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you justify the reasonableness of this method except on this principle, that He deliberately created a saintly character in a few whom He could trustfully employ to act upon the many? This is just what our blessed Lord did, and the Catholic Church is the result.

III. Now, I have asked you to consider the necessity of the saint's existence on these two grounds, and now I will speak more briefly of another. Do not let us think of the society around us only, or of ourselves only, and benefit by the presence of the saints; but the desire of God is to be considered. Now, what does the will of God require? Why did He make man in His own image? What was the travail of the soul of the Incarnate Son which we men are born to satisfy? What is the intention of the Holy Ghost when He takes of the things of Christ, and brings them to us? It is that men should be recovered to a life of union with God. The mission of the Holy Ghost has two intentions—one towards the Father and the Son, one towards man. The Holy Ghost longs to fulfil the will of the Father in the creation and redemption of our life, and to recompense Jesus our Saviour for all that men did to Him so bitterly upon the earth. Every saint passing from mediocrity upwards to the perfect life is another revelation of God to the world. 'Men take note of him that he hath been with Jesus,' and fastening their eyes upon him, see in his face the face of an angel, and, by the vision of saintliness in the Church that is amongst you, angels themselves, though they live in the presence of God, learn more of Him whom they see and worship, for, as S. Paul described one function of the Church in the town of Ephesus, it is 'to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.'

ARCHDEACON FURSE.

Human Intolerance and Divine Patience.

And he said unto them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him: Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up? But he saith: Nay, lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. S. MATTHEW xiii. 28, 29, 30.

FROM this parable we learn how like the Kingdom of heaven is to the world as we see it and know it. It is disturbed by the presence of evil growths. In nature we find this disturbance and contradiction of forces and effects in great variety. The products of the same soil are alternated by growths that nourish and sustain life and by noxious and poisonous forms of vegetation. If we turn to

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the world of human life and history, we find the most improved civilisation disturbed by the intermixture of good and evil.

This parable, too, gives a bird's-eye view of the whole world, with all its contrasts of virtue and vice, of grace and wickedness, and, however widely they may range, they must be reduced in the last resort to these two elements, tares and wheat—the thing right and the thing wrong. But the analogy or comparison of the parable must not be pushed too far.

‘An enemy hath done this!’ What enemy? How did he come? might be asked. The Saviour intended no metaphysical inquiry, and, therefore, He gave no account of the when and how evil came into the world. The evidence of the enemy is everywhere. The presence of evil is proof enough of the adversary; account for it how we will, by personal agency or moral disorganisation, or the necessary defection of limited powers. It is here, a problem, as vast as our humanity, and no solution is so simple and so thorough as the one in this parable. An enemy hath done this! The intermixture of good and evil being the state of things all round, it is interesting to know how men would deal with it, even good men, and how God actually deals with it.

I. What men would do. ‘Wilt Thou then that we go and gather them up?’ It should always be remembered that there is an arrogance of virtue, as well as the sauciness and presumption of vice. Men may have pure intentions, but their proposed methods of giving effect to their intentions may corrupt them. It is of the essence of pride and effrontery for men to propose to do God's work in their own way. Christ's way of doing God's work was: ‘Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.’ These men in the parable not only sought permission, but proposed a plan for dealing with the tares. They sought permission rather than submission, and their plan had the charm of a prompt revenge upon the enemy. Revenge is not only sweet, but safe too, we think, if we can persuade ourselves we are doing God's service by it. There is a fierce joy in the man's heart who can gratify his enmity under cover of uprooting an evil.

On this principle too, we should all be saints, full of the faith which removes mountains, and of the impulsive generosity which bestows our goods on the poor and gives our bodies to be burned, if only we can escape the law of charity and pluck up some tares that have been growing up in the gardens and fields of our pleasures, or fancies, or bigotries. Take this last matter of bigotry as we see it developed in society, and Church history and life to-day. The arrogant language of bigotry has always been ‘Wilt Thou that we go and gather them up?’ When the early Church had left its first

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beautiful unity, that unity which by its grace won the admiration of the heathen Romans—this language was uttered by the different sects. Each one appealed to God for power to pluck up the other, and readily persuaded itself that the other was a tare. The spirit of arrogant self-appointment has grown up through the ages of the Church. In our day it has culminated in the Roman Catholic Church in the logical development of pretensions too grievous to be borne by any country in Europe. And the germ of all human intolerance and bigotry is here in the question of these men in the parable, 'Wilt Thou, then, that we go and gather them up?'

Many of the world's wars have been radically ecclesiastical in their origin. Provinces have been scathed, fields reddened with blood, cities blackened which had shone with the brightest achievements of civilisation, and homes unnumbered shadowed by death, and convulsed with agony, and all this the work of men who said, 'Wilt Thou that we go and gather them up?' What this principle can do on a large scale it can do proportionately on a small one. The acorn virtually holds the oak, and a false desire to do God's service as the means of gratifying this passion of bigotry has turned saints into devils, and is fraught with possibilities of ruin to society and the Church. Rather let us say: 'What wilt Thou have me to do?'

II. What would be the result of such impatient action? 'Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them.' Men may not only do evil that good may come, but good and evil may be the result, and, if judged by this, may be condemned as tares. The intermixture of good and evil by the conditions of life and the relations and institutions of society is a problem and a difficulty. If we could cut down evil as the mower cuts the grass, if its forms all grew together, the field of the world could soon be cleared.

But this intermixture of good and evil forbids rashness and haste. The imperfect methods of human justice often involve confusion of the bad and good. A murderer, a robber, a forger, cannot be smitten alone; his wife, his children, his friends, must feel the blow also. The divine method is free from such defects. Besides, every man, perhaps, is a tare to some other man in some aspects of his character. None are all wheat in human judgment, and not so even in fact. Men may be growing in good and evil at the same time. A man may become more pious and at the same time more selfish. As age increases he may look oftener at things unseen, but yet have a firmer grip upon those that are seen.

You may meet with men who are gentle, but not particularly truthful; devout and conscientious—men of integrity, but harshness

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embitters their most honest deeds—men of rich sympathy, but impulsively and passionately unjust. All have some taint, fault, or defect, even as the loveliest flowers or fruits have some speck, or some tainted crimp on the leaf. And if we would remove all the tares, we must remove one another off the face of the earth, or consign one another to certain conventional hells, social, political, or sectarian. The truth is, though we are no better than we should be, yet we are unquestionably better than we think each other to be. Hence comes the grand function of the Church—preferring one another in love, nurturing the feeblest virtues, feeding babes in Christ, helping each other on to the perfect stature of men in Christ Jesus.

III. What the Master does. ‘Let both grow together until the harvest.’ How Godlike is this large patience, like the firmament of heaven, serene and vast, while the storm of men’s passions rages beneath. And yet the very largeness and fulness of this patience irritate us.

There are certain crimes committed by certain men which perhaps no human law can touch, and we feel as if God ought to come out of His hiding-place and smite or brand the criminal as in the case of Cain. But if the man we think of was branded, he would perhaps be the wrong man, or, not knowing the whole circumstances of the case, we might overwhelm the most urgent extenuations. Men cannot be divided absolutely into wheat and tares. Some are neither. They are a sort of middle growth. None are all wheat. ‘There is none righteous, no not one.’ Are any all tare? Has the enemy saturated every fibre of the human soul with his malignity? In the darkest cases known some heavenly growth has been found, like Mungo Park’s flower in the African desert. Some men are not far from the Kingdom of heaven who yet remain in the domain of worldliness. There are some to-day on the flood of a spiritual enthusiasm who to-morrow may be given up to wicked indifference or sinful lust. Men may be Davids in infamy and devotion, Peters in fervour and boldness, in falsehood and cowardice at different periods of life. What should we have done with these men? What did God do?

‘Let both grow together till the harvest.’ This partial and contradictory and conflictive development in men’s characters, shows the wisdom as well as the goodness of God’s patience. If He acted in the way of our impulses and false conclusions, the world would be thrown into moral confusion a thousandfold more distressing than that which we witness. We want the ripe wheat of harvest before the husbandry of moral discipline, and the spring and summer of opportunity have done their work. We are no better than children who rake up their seeds to see if they are growing.

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God waits for the harvest in every life as stars wait for the night, and as the hills for the morning's dawn. He waited from all eternity for the time of man's creation. He waited for the fulness of the time to come, which gave the world the Lord Jesus Christ. He has waited through the uprisings, storms, and follies of human passion and wickedness. He has waited through the faithlessness and inconstancy of the Church, and waits still for the harvest, for the end of human folly, for the subjugation of every phase and form of evil, and for the maturity of the human soul in holiness, truth and love. He waits now to be gracious, waits to forgive our sins, waits to help our infirmities, and waits to be patient and just towards all our unintentional and wilful shortcomings. Calmly and grandly He says: 'Let both grow together till the harvest.'

The great spiritual upraising and regeneration of humanity goes on. Tares will be consumed in various fires, used for the purification and exaltation of men's characters, and the wheat shall yet grow to its perfection in form, beauty, and fruitfulness to the praise and glory of His grace.

JOSEPH SHAW.

Christ, the Physician.

(Sermon preached before the International Medical Congress.)

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. S. MATTHEW ix. 35.

NOTHING in the Lord's work was accident; all was deliberate, all had an object. Nothing in His work was inevitable, except so far as it was freely dictated by His wisdom and His mercy. To suppose that this union in Him of prophet and physician was determined by the necessity of some rude civilisation, such as that of certain tribes in Central Africa and elsewhere, or certain periods and places in mediæval Europe when knowledge was scanty, when it was easy and needful for a single person at each social centre to master all that was known on two or three great subjects, this is to make a supposition which does not apply to Palestine at the time of our Lord's appearance. The later prophets were prophets and nothing more, neither legislators, nor statesmen, nor physicians. In John the Baptist we see no traces of the restorative power exerted on some rare occasions by Elijah and Elisha, and when our Lord appeared, dispensing on every side cures for bodily disease, the sight was just as novel to His contemporaries as it was welcome. Nor are His

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healing works to be accounted for by saying that they were only designed to draw attention to His message, by certificating His authority to deliver it, or by saying that they were only symbols of a higher work which He had more at heart in its many and varying aspects—the work of healing the diseases of the human soul. True it is that His healing activity had this double value: it was evidence of His authority as a divine teacher, it was a picture in detail addressed to sense of what, as a restorer of our race, He meant to do in regions altogether beyond the sphere of sense.

I. But these aspects of His care for the human body were not, I repeat, primary: they were strictly incidental. We may infer with reverence and with certainty that His first object was to show Himself as the deliverer and restorer of human nature as a whole—not of the reason and conscience merely, without the imagination and the affections—not of the spiritual side of men's nature, without the bodily; and therefore, He was not merely teacher, but also physician, and therefore and thus He has shed upon the medical profession to the end of time a radiance and a consecration which is ultimately due to the conditions of that redemptive work, to achieve which He came down from heaven teaching and healing. This, the motto of our Lord's life, is the motto also of the profession of medicine, which alike not merely heals but teaches. It also is in its way a ministry of prophecy, with truths and virtues specially intrusted to it, that it may recommend and propagate them. It is little to say of this great profession in our time that it is a keeper and teacher of intellectual truth. We all know that it has furnished of late years to literature some of its most enterprising efforts in the way of speculative thought, and the remarkable address with which this Congress was opened, will have informed the public generally, while it evidently reminded the audience which listened to it, of the additions which within the last score of years medical science has made to human knowledge—additions so vast, so intricate, as to be for the moment well-nigh unmanageable, and of the immense perspectives which are thus opening before it. On these high things it would be impossible to dwell here, but as a prominent teacher of truth, medical science, I may be allowed to say, has ever powers and responsibilities which are all its own. The physician can point out with an authority given to no other man the present operative force of some of the laws of God. The laws of nature, as we call them, are not less the law and will of God than are the Ten Commandments. Nay, that moral law finds its echo and its counter-sign in this physical world; it is justified by the natural catastrophes that follow on its neglect. It is not the clergyman, but the physician, who can demonstrate the sure connection between unrestrained indulgence and the decay of health and

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life, who can put his finger precisely upon the causes which too often fill even with strong young men the corridors, not only of our hospitals, but also of our lunatic asylums, who can illustrate by instances drawn from experience the tender foresight of moral provisions which at first sight may appear to be tyrannical or capricious. To be able to show this in detail, to give men thus the physical reasons for moral truth—this is a great prophetic power, this is a vast capacity which we might well envy in its possessors, this is a vast responsibility which they who wield it like other prophets must one day account for.

II. Consider the destiny of the body. As we Christians gaze at it we know that there awaits it the humiliation of death and decay; we know also that it has a future beyond; the hour of death is the hour of resurrection. Beyond the humiliations of the coffin and the grave there is the life which will not die. The reconstruction of the decayed body presents to us no greater difficulties than its original construction, and if we ask the question how it will be, we are told, upon what is for us quite sufficient authority, that our Lord Jesus Christ 'shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.' And thus in this life the body is like a child that has great prospects before it, and we are interested, and we respect it accordingly. But you can add to these motives for reverence another, which appeals not to faith, but to experience. It has been finely said that among the students of nature irreverence is possible only to the superficial. You are too conscious of the great powers in whose presence you move and work, of the mysteries above, around, within you, of the magnificent and exhaustless subjects whose fringes you seem only to have touched when you know most about them, to escape from the awe which all true knowledge, with its ever-present consciousness of a much larger ignorance, must always inspire. In this matter science, whatever be her immediate interests, is ever the same. You can understand Pascal saying the highest effort of reason is to admit that there is an infinity of things which altogether and perpetually transcend it. You can understand our own Newton comparing his finest achievements to those of the child playing with the waves as they break upon the sand. The temper of true science is ever the same, and as you move along the awful frontier where the world of matter shades off into the world of spirit, not the least service that you could do to the men of this generation would be to teach them the mysteriousness of what they see and what they are, to prepare them to do some sort of justice to what revelation has to say about what they do not see and what they will be.

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III. And lastly, the profession of medicine is from the nature, I had almost dared to say from the necessity, of the case a teacher of benevolence. Often must we have witnessed the transformation—one of the most striking and beautiful to be seen in life—by which the medical student becomes the medical practitioner. We may have known a medical student who is reckless, selfish, or worse, and we presently behold him as a medical practitioner leading a more unselfish and devoted life than any other member of society. ‘What,’ we ask, ‘is this? Is this something akin surely to ministerial ordination that has wrought this altogether surprising change, that has brought with it such an inspiration of tenderness and sympathy?’ The answer, apparently, is that now, as a practitioner, he approaches human suffering from a new point of view. As a student he looked on it as something to be observed, discussed, analysed, if possible, anyhow, lectured upon; now as a practitioner he is absorbed by the idea that it is something to be relieved. This new point of view, so profoundly Christian, will often take possession of a man’s whole moral nature, and give it nothing less than a totally new direction; and thus, as a rule, the medical practitioner is at once a master and a teacher of the purest benevolence, not only or chiefly those great heads and lights of the profession, whose names are household words in all the universities of Europe, and who have some part of their reward, at any rate, in a homage which neither wealth nor birth can possibly command, but also, at least in this country, and pre-eminently so, the obscure country doctor, whose sphere of fame is his parish or his neighbourhood, and upon whom the sun of publicity rarely or never sheds its rays. His life is passed chiefly in the homes of the very poor, and amidst acts of the kindest and most self-sacrificing service. For him the loss of rest and the loss of health is too often nothing less than a law of his work; and as he pursues his career so glorious and yet so humble, from day to day, his left hand rarely knows what his right hand doeth. And yet such men as these, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, maintain the state of the world while all their desire is in the work of their craft. They pour oil and wine, as can do few or none others, into the gaping wounds of our social system; they bind and heal, not merely the limbs of their patients, but the more formidable fractures, which separate class from class, and unless He whom now we worship on His throne in heaven is very unlike all that He was eighteen hundred years since on earth, such lives as these must be, in not a few cases, very welcome indeed to Him, if only for the reason that they are so like one very conspicuous aspect of His own. H. P. LIDDON.

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Elijah's Mantle.

And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. 2 KINGS ii. 14.

ELISHA was anxious to make his work in his day and generation to be one of service, and his anxiety showed itself in the petition he presented. He desired to be filled with that spirit which would fit him for his toil. The answer which was given by Elijah was, that he could have that spirit of fitness if he had another spirit, viz., that of insight. If his capacity was such that he could, as it were, read beneath the surface of life and understand its deep and hidden meaning, then the power of that spirit would be bestowed upon him. In the event, he proved he had that power of insight, and now the time had come when he must put into effect the powers he desired. Immediately he was thrown upon his own responsibility, Elijah having departed from him, he was confronted by an obstacle. The river Jordan rolled between him and the sphere of his work. Had his prayer been fully answered or not? Could he break down this obstacle, and enter in and take possession of the sphere of duty, where his heart desired to dwell? It was a moment of crisis, but he remembered the mantle of Elijah, and forgot for a moment the eyes that were upon him. He remembered only the strength which had made his master strong, and the difficulties disappeared, the obstacles were vanquished, and not only so, but the homage of the sons of the prophets was received. The effort put forth by Elisha at that time was the assertion of his own personality, and this it is which a man was bound to make at some time or another in the face of the world. A new generation, as it were, stood face to face with the difficulties which were peculiarly its own. The land of promise, which was often the land of duty, lay on the other side of the flood, and it was the legacy of the past which it was for Elisha to appropriate, and make his own, for just in proportion as he was able to grasp and turn into a new weapon the legacy he had received, and to remember what need there was of breathing his own personality into it, was he capable and fit to be a prophet of his age. It was in the realisation of his own personality that he found power. When he had gained this victory, and the confidence and consciousness of himself, then it was that the sons of the prophets made their submission to him. Is not this then the one thought which may well occupy our minds—the assertion of our own personality? For a moment let me go back. Sometimes when we face our age, we say to ourselves, looking at life and its various circumstances and significances, what we really need amongst us is a prophet of the nature of Elijah. Men are conscious that there

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are many things they hold in high esteem, but it is that of conventionality and not of truth. They long for some prophet of flame to come, that should unmask these hollow things, and show them as they are, and tell the Pharisees and Sadducees of the age that there is weakness and rottenness in their system. At other times men look into the face of the world, and say that not an Elijah, but an Elisha is needed.

That which distinguished Elisha from Elijah was his diffusive power. Elijah was solitary, and his eccentricity was his power, but Elisha blended easily with all classes. He belonged to the court as its adviser; he belonged to the people as their aid and assistant. In every class and department of life he made his power to be felt, and in an age in which they might say of a truth that social disintegration was threatened, surely the prophet must be one who could hold touch with all classes. It was an Elisha that was needed, but if Elisha was to discharge his work he must be gifted with insight. No surface views would do; the man who read life only from his own little section, and mistook the waves that fell on the coast for the great drift-tide which flowed beneath the surface, was not the man that could minister to his age. Nor was it only needful that he should have this gift of insight, of penetrating beneath the surface, he must have also distinct personality, he must be able to assert himself in the world. That is what we are taught by Elisha. But do we not mark also that it is seldom that men become aware of their personality or are encouraged to assert it at all? They are separated by physical features from one another, but how slowly do they disentangle their own personal, moral force, and really assert it in the world. The only motive is when some crisis comes, and yet all along, the catechism of our own Church has been teaching us that one of the duties of our life is to recognise ourselves as ourselves. When we are asked to state our name, before any thought of Christian truth or doctrine is poured into our understanding, is it not to remind us of this, that in the highest aspect of life we must be ourselves and not others? But I said it was only in a crisis that we are encouraged, or should I say coerced, to assert this responsibility. When some change comes upon our life, and we are thrown upon our own resources, and we must act for ourselves, then we stand for the first time consciously alone. Stand for the first time consciously alone, do I say? Yes, and the more consciously alone because in the eyes of a crowd. And then we discover how very weak had been the resources at our command. We had lived as Elisha had, dependent largely upon the intellectual superiority and moral fervour of some great religious teacher. When he spoke, all things seemed easy and difficulties vanished.

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His arguments were clear and incisive, and his logic was irresistible. When we confronted some Jordan we found it not hard to cross over the flood, for he with his mantle split the wave before us, and we passed over on dry land. The arguments that seemed to hinder us were torn in shreds; we caught his moral fervour; and we thought the victories of his intellect were our own. But when we stood alone and faced these things for ourselves we found that the life which we believed to be ours was only reflected from him; we found that the warmth which throbbed within was only a contagious warmth; that our enthusiasm was not evolved out of our own personality, and, therefore, we found ourselves more painfully situated, because the powers we believed we possessed were no longer ours. We were like men trading upon borrowed capital. The lender had withdrawn his aid, and we knew how slender our resources were. Such a time brought its snares, and there were two temptations immediately weighing upon us. There was the suppression of personality due to vanity, and the suppression of personality due to mistrust, and it might be to imitativeness. We are in danger the moment we feel ourselves in such difficulty. The moment we become proud of any talent we cease to be able to use it with true significance. To pass by the legacy which has fallen at our feet, the rich heritage of the accumulated knowledge, experience, resources, and faith of all past ages, is not merely egotism, but it is unscientific egotism. To ignore the past is impossible, and our reaching forward to grasp the heritage of the future depends upon our taking our stand upon the highest place to which past generations have brought us. We cannot afford to fling aside the mantle of Elijah, but neither must we imagine that Elisha, having received the mantle of Elijah, could forget his personality, and think that by virtue of the mantle he might charm his way across, without any need of individual exertion, to the other side. Imitativeness will never bring about true success, and it is the translating of our life into a mere echo. When it takes the form of shirking the responsibilities of life, and asking some incantation to take the place of the exercise of our own moral vigour, and the exertion of our own distinct individuality, it only degrades itself into superstition. Into neither of these snares did Elisha fall. He grasped the mantle of Elijah, and would not cast it from him—the legacy of the past was rich with power; but neither did he believe that it was surcharged with any mystic virtue that could relieve him of the necessity of personal exertion. He grasped it, made it his own, and it became a weapon in his hand. This is the secret of power. If you reflect you will see that the very moment when a man is himself, when he asserts himself, grasps the fact that

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he is a responsible agent, and has the courage to say he will be himself, in that moment his power over others is secure. It is the parable of the world. Personality wins power, and gains ascendancy over others, and it is a force which in all ages has proved mighty.

II. There are two powers which have played a leading part in the drama of the world's story, the one the power of thought, and the other the power of personality, but we all know it is personality we looked for. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, told them that boys differed more in energy than in intellectual force; and what did that mean, but that the boy that could assert himself, who could blend his personality with his work, who had energetic forces beneath himself, would press his way in front of the boy who had mere intellectual capacity. Personality is a power, and it is energetic personality which makes its way in the world. Had Columbus only been a man of dreams he had failed, but by his own personal vigour, he forced the attention of the courts of Europe. It was not Sheridan's masterly parts and brilliant brain which were the key of his success, but his energy, and this it is that men have sung of, and that which the Roman poet sung of when he described 'the man of firm and righteous will who could rise above the clamour of the crowd.' In art we have the same illustration, and we can in a picture of a genius recognise the touches of distinct individuality. It is not merely ideas or great thoughts which have made men gain ascendancy over their fellows, but it is personality. Charles XII. of Sweden was not marked as an intellectual man, but it was his personality that pressed his troops to victory. But it may be said, do you not grant anything in the world's progress to thought? I grant everything you will. It is capable of revolutionising dynasties, but what I plead for is that thought without personality is incapable of progress. Thought may have a certain measure of sway, but it does not make its way, and become a power in the world, till there has been an apostle of that idea. We need a personality to give expression to it, and make it a power to the world. When we have linked together thought and personality, as in the career of Mahomet, then we have elements which give it strength and force and durability. There might be the thought of orthodoxy, but how weak it would be, unless it became incorporated in the flexible genius of an Athanasius. There was the germ of Reformation, but where would the Reformation be without the reformer? It is the same if we take free trade and the cause of humanity. The cause of humanity was an idea floating in men's minds, but they must have the personalising of the idea in a Wilberforce, and for free trade they must have a Cobden. Was there no reason for this? The reason is simple. In the first place men are very slow to attempt

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things when they remain only on paper. An abstraction is always difficult to the multitude. The majority of mankind cannot be philosophers, and even those who demand that their pet theories shall be put into working form. When a theory is brought forward we demand a working model, and as it were the personalising of the principle before we will believe it. Truth which is merely written in abstract phraseology does not enter the mind, but truth unfolded and put into concrete form, and in a way in which it can be personally recognised, becomes instantly a power. May I not ask you to say that this is the principle in religion? You may have a thousand conceptions thrown at your feet, and you are surprised, perplexed, or bewildered, but Christianity gives us a personalised creed; behind its creed there is a Person. The very force of Christianity lies in this, that behind all there stands the Christ, and just because it never is a real abstraction, but an incarnation, therefore has it been a power in the world. So because beneath the Christian creed an ever-living personality exists, so till He dies it will live. Do we pray for some new revelation, and are we going to turn our back upon a thing that looked bereft of its vigour and had lost all the life that once breathed within it, or are we going to say it needed not so much that some new robe of life should drop at our feet, as that we should put our personality into it, grasp what is true like men, and believe that religion is not a speculation but a practice? Let us turn truth into a weapon, and use it practically, because we have appropriated it personally, and behold a thousand things would gain a new meaning that seemed obscure before. For that is the very law of life, that in proportion as we take up a thing in the sense and for the purpose for which it was designed to be used, are we able to understand and grasp it. Let us assert our personality and be men. If we are confronting difficulties, by all means confront them, and not shirk them. Are we going to leave the land of our labour and work, because of this difficulty, this Jordan, which flowed between? God forbid. Knowing the weapons which lie at our feet we will not at the first difficulties turn whimpering away, and say things are not what we expected. Had Elisha done so he had been like some modern ones who worked and whimpered their difficulties into a review or an article, instead of facing them personally. Neither will we foolishly imitate. Whatever was best of the past must be made our own, and must be personalised. There is deep need of this, because the world has reached a stage in which everything presents itself in the mass. We look upon multitudes and nations, and individuals are lost. There is a tendency to think that movements proceed from great mass centres,

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the result being that men say the individual is nothing. We do not see the trees, as was said by one, because of the size of the forest, but this is the very time in which, if we are courageous, we shall come to the front and assert our personality. And is it not true, and increasingly true, that amongst us the movements which are rising to the front are movements of practical work. The age of speculativeness is being left behind; the age of practical duty is at hand. The exceeding bitter cry of the outcast has entered into our ears, and we have risen up to respond. We do not need to argue; we need to act. Life is too sad, men and women are too miserable; we must not wrangle longer, but must act. Let us take up whatever the heritage of the past was, the good and the true, and make it our own, let us translate it into action, and the things which seemed—and, perchance, they were—so very full of significance, will be seen in their true significance or their true insignificance, when we are acting, living, obedient men, bringing the life of Christ, and the power of Christ, and the spirit of Christ into our life. When men see this energy has entered into our life, will they not believe the power which lies behind, and will they not know that He must live in whose name we have gone forth. So was it spoken by one who never sang very loftily, but touched one strain which is worth our remembrance:

‘Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world’s famine feed;
Speak truly, and each thought of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.’

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

The Succession of Gifts.

(Preached in Westminster Abbey.)

The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. 2 KINGS ii. 15.

THE lessons from the Old Testament on this day conclude the long narrative which has for several Sundays occupied us concerning Elijah and Elisha. I propose to consider some of the lessons which may be derived from the story of the departure of Elijah and the succession of Elisha. These lessons are twofold, and quite distinct from each other.

I. First, there is a lesson which we are content to learn from the departure of every good or eminent man from amongst us. Elijah’s

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translation is intended to be a good man's death in its noblest aspect. In various ways God calls his servants away ; sometimes by a long, peaceful illness ; sometimes by a sudden stroke ; sometimes almost literally like Elijah, so, at least, we may say of the martyrs of old, in storm and whirlwind, by chariots and horses of fire. But in all the various forms in which that inevitable day may come upon us, what we should most wish for would be that death should, like Elijah's, seem to those whom we leave behind but as the completion of what they have already known. ' My father, my father,' said Elisha, as he saw him borne away, ' the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.' So Elijah had seemed in life a firmer defence and guard to his country than all the chariots and horsemen that were ever pouring in upon them from the surrounding tribes ; and so he seemed when he passed away lost in the flames of a fiery chariot and the fiery horsemen. It was no new admiration which that sight called forth from his disciple ; it was only the old abiding impression strengthened, fixed, stamped for ever by the closing scene. This is what death, death the universal event, should be to all, whether in recollection or in anticipation, the climax and the crown of life.

Some such thoughts as these crowd upon us, for example, when we here of the sudden and tragical deaths which, as by a flash of lightning, illuminate lives hitherto, perhaps, altogether unknown to us. When we sorrow for the loss of our brave countrymen, perishing amid flames and carnage in the desperate fight of Cabul, there is, at least, this mournful satisfaction amidst the darkness of despondency and the bitterness of recrimination, that the courage of their deaths was not unworthy of their lives, and that their lives will be known yet more keenly than if they had passed away amid the easy comforts of home and peace.

And such, again, are the thoughts of another kind which must occur from time to time in this great sepulchral church as in the deaths of the benefactors of their country and mankind. It is one of the very purposes of such deaths and such solemnities that they recall and place vividly before us the lesson of each life that passes away. While a man lives we use his energies, we reap the fruit of his labours, and we hardly remember who it was that showered those blessings upon us, we forget that those blessings were not always with us. The same hand of death which arrests the course of the beneficent existence, turns the lamp of truth on the character and the doings of him who has gone, and for the first time we recognise how much we owe to the self-denying labours, the incessant struggle against the sluggishness, the incredulity, the self-interest with which he had to contend. We feel that such men are the salt of the earth, which saves us from corruption. Such solemnities in this place of

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necessity come but seldom. It is now fifteen years since I have presided over this Abbey, and the number of eminent men who have been interred within its walls has been but fourteen, hardly one in the course of each year. It is this rarity which gives the significance of which I am speaking to each occasion; and as we look back over those fourteen funerals, we see that each one had its peculiar physiognomy, each struck a different chord in the heart of the country, each one revealed, as it were, a new character for us to contemplate. The event was the same to all, but the result which each left behind was far different. The vigorous patriotic statesman; the humorous and philanthropic novelist; the world-embracing astronomer; the high-minded scholar and historian; the most learned of English prelates; the gallant soldier of Afghanistan; the resolute statesman of the Punjab; the laborious and brilliant student of literature; the indefatigable explorer of the earth's primeval structure; the enterprising missionary traveller; the sweet musician; the restorer and builder of our churches; the reformer of the postal communication of the earth, these, each as they passed away gathered round their graves a separate class of mourners, each stamped a distinct mark on the recollection of the time, each left a peculiar vacancy to be supplied by those who followed.

II. And this leads me to the second part of the lesson of our subject, namely, the succession of gifts by which in different ages of the world the purposes of providence are carried on. You have heard it powerfully stated that the aim of every Christian, and of every man, is to press onwards towards the perfection of himself and of his race. But this lesson extends in a thousand directions, and is forced upon us by the problem of the extreme diversity of the forms and genius of philanthropy which exists in each succeeding generation. It is this duty, it is this possibility of carrying on the work of our predecessors which is grandly expressed in the story of Elijah's departure. We are oppressed at times with the thought of the vast difference between the mind of former generations and the mind of the present, and we fall into two extremes—one the error of trying to recall what there was good in the past by imitating its outward form and fashion; the other the error of thinking either that there was no good in the past, or that it is hopeless to do any good in the present. Look for a moment at the story of Elisha's succession; it is, at least, a frame in which we may place our thoughts. The mantle of Elijah descended on Elisha, so the story tells us, and from those words has been drawn a figure of speech by which in all future ages has been represented to our minds the succession of the gifts of God. Elisha, we are told, was himself altogether different in aspect, in character, in life, from his mighty prede-

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cessor. Unlike Elijah, his early life had not been in the wild forest of Gilead, but following peacefully his twelve yoke of oxen in the valley of the Jordan. His very appearance revealed the difference—not clothed in camel's hair; never wearing his master's mantle, even although it fell over him; not secluded in mountain fastnesses, but dwelling in king's palaces; lingering among the sons of the prophets, within the precincts of ancient colleges, catching his inspiration from the minstrel's art, embowered in the shade of the beautiful groves which overhang the spring that still bears his name; dwelling in some bower in Carmel or Dothan, or in some alcove in the plain of Esdraelon, with table spread and bed prepared for him by pious hands—the exact opposite of the wild and solitary life of his predecessor. Yes, in all this he had sought, earnestly sought, that the spirit of his master might descend upon him. He eagerly caught the mantle as it fell from him; he found that the Lord God of Elijah was still with him, when he was left in the wilderness to cross the Jordan alone; and when the sons of the prophets saw him approach, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha,' and they went to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him, and for sixty years from that time he instructed, warned, guided the people of Israel. His life, in this respect also unlike that of Elijah, was not spent in unavailing struggles, but in wide successes. He was sought out, not as the enemy, but the friend of kings. His works of mercy were known far and wide throughout the land, and when, at last, in good old age his last day came, he was not carried away, like Elijah, no one knew whither, but his sepulchre was well known, and wonders were wrought at it, continuing still the beneficence of his long and gentle life.

III. What is it we may learn from thinking of this? We learn the variety, and, at the same time, the continuous succession of the divine gifts. We learn that, in order to be useful in our generation, we need not copy the outward garb and manners of the former age, or of characters not congenial to ourselves. The spirit of departed greatness may rest on those who, in all outward respects, are quite unlike their Master. We might follow this through all the departments of social life. It was so in the constant succession of poets such as lie in yonder transept. Cowley was not like Spenser, nor was Gray like Milton, and yet each was devoted to his predecessors, and felt his whole soul inspired by their works. It was so in the case of the social reformers of whom we have just now spoke. They rest by the standard-bearer of Agincourt, beside the governor of Calais, whilst Calais still was ours. The contrast between the gifts of those ancient warriors on the one hand, and the gifts of such peaceful

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benefactors of society as James Watt and Rowland Hill on the other hand, is as wide as it is possible to conceive, and yet both alike were enrolled in a long service to their country and their God.

Not in missions, however zealous, nor in synodical gatherings, however well organised, and however each may be good in special times, and for special purposes, not in these, but in the parochial work of the clergy, is the work of the Church of England seen to its best advantage. Failure in this is the worst aspect of the Church; success in this is the Church's best test. In this the good spirit of Elijah is carried on by the better spirit of Elisha. To preserve and to improve in every branch of its efficiency, this element of a national Church is surely worthy of the effort of the most enlightened statesmen and the most zealous Churchmen. From this, the most endearing and the most enduring part of our profession, may our rising clergy not be diverted. In this, our best position of civilising and Christianising our countrymen, forsake us not, O God, in our old age when we are old and grey-headed, until we have shown Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to all them that are yet to come.

A. P. STANLEY.

Trust God: Trust Men.

Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. S. JOHN i. 42.

I. **T**HOSE words which I took for the text, strange, perhaps, as they might have sounded for the text of a sermon, must have sounded still stranger when Christ first spoke them to this man. It was a strange thing indeed to a man of the East, to whom a name always conveys significant associations, to a member of that Hebrew race with whose sacred literature the thought of change of name was always bound up with the thought of change of life, work, character, or mode of thought, a strange thing to say to a man the first time you met him. Peter had been brought to the Lord by his brother, and the first words that the Lord says to him are simply to tell him his name, and then to add these strange, suggestive, thoughtful words. Nevertheless, I think they show, if we think of them, one of those characteristics of Christ that perhaps we pass over constantly, but which, nevertheless, are second to none in the estimate of what He is and was as a man—I mean that insight into human character which marked all His dealings with His friends and with His foes.

And that quality of insight which we have seen marked the Master, and which, if we had time, we could show marked His dealing

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with individuals other than S. Peter, with the Apostles, with foes as well as friends, that insight of His is not necessarily a divine quality, not necessarily supernatural at all: it is a perfectly human quality. Insight of that sort may be defined perhaps as a compound of two things, of sympathy and of self-forgetfulness. It is a strange thing, but those two qualities, to my mind at least, are those which go to make up the great artist. He must have sympathy, he must be able, nay, he must be compelled, to forget himself, for that means, you see, the power, not only of feeling what other people feel, but of actually transporting yourself into their point of view, of being for the moment what they are. It is that which enables an artist to paint either portrait, historical picture, or anything else which requires the higher qualities of art, it is that which enables a man to see the outward flaws and defects of a character, and pierce to the rock which lies behind it, the capacity for loftier and holier things. Sympathy *plus* self-forgetfulness makes up insight; and in the Lord Jesus Christ was not only sympathy combined with self-forgetfulness, but sympathy associated with an absolute want of taint of selfishness; a sympathy so perfect, a sympathy so absolute, that no taint or sort of selfishness spoiling entered into it to mar its power; and therefore you see how it was that the Lord could not only enter into the individual circumstances and character of a man like this, but He could get behind, so to speak, the human qualities of all the race; He could see not only what an individual man was and might be, but He could see what humanity is and what humanity might be. And that is the reason, surely, why His words, why His whole life, are the teaching fit for all ages of the world and for all characters that men may bear.

II. Two points of the multiform moral of that story will serve to close. They are very simple—trust God, trust men. Trust God, for God trusts you, and, in spite of all that you may have done to betray Him, He still gives you cause to hope for future labour in His service, and cause to know that you have capacity to do something for your fellow-men and for Him. Trust Him, and learn to trust, from Christ's dealings with Peter, learn to trust more fully your fellow-men. It is not when a man has shown himself incapable of fulfilling a trust, unworthy of confidence, that you should immediately treat him as a man who has behaved worthily, admirably, but you should never let a man see you do not believe in his capacity for better things. You may not be able to trust him as if he were entirely faithful to you, but it may be with him as was the case with S. Peter, that the very man who has most shamefully betrayed is the very man to be most highly exalted in position and office. It may be so now and again, but the general rule in dealing

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with men who have betrayed us is to show them, not that we think them too bad to be trusted, too hopeless to be given any work to do, but to show them that they can, if they please, buy back our confidence, to show that we still believe they are capable of righteousness, developing, perhaps, in the slow discipline of future trial as the years burn out the baser self, and the ape and the tiger die in the man. And still, with that capacity for future failure lying on the surface and staring Him in the face, Christ told S. Peter he was a man of rock, building on the better side of him, building on what was strong and good in him rather than dwelling upon what was base and mean. It is soon enough, after a man has been placed face to face with what he may be, that he finds out the miserable imperfection of what he is. In our dealings with our fellow-men I know no better moral than Christ's dealing with this man, which I expressed in those two short sentences. In all your life, and in all your dealings, trust God, trust men.

H. C. SHUTTLEWORTH.

The Theme, the Manner, and the Object of Christian Preaching.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. COLOSSIANS i. 28.

ON looking at the verse three points seem to emerge distinctly from it. The theme, the manner, the object, of our preaching. First, what have we to preach? Christ. Then, how have we to preach Christ? In two ways: in the way of warning, and in the way of teaching. And, lastly, why we are to preach Christ? For the purpose of presenting every one of our people perfect in Christ Jesus in the great day of the Saviour's appearing and Kingdom.

Let us consider these points in order.

I. We have, says S. Paul, to preach Christ. Now, to preach Christ is not to mention Him, more or less frequently, in our sermons and discourses. It is obvious that there might be a perpetual recurring repetition of His sacred name, and yet that the entire tone of thought should be as antagonistic as possible to the teaching of the Saviour. It is obvious, again, that we might omit the name, keeping it, as it were, altogether in the background, and yet that the sentiments expressed should breathe so much of the Christ-like spirit as to bring the image of the unseen Saviour at once to the mental view, and to attract towards Him very strongly the desires and affections of the heart. The preaching of Christ, then, does not depend upon

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the frequent or infrequent mention of His name, but upon making Him the starting-point and foundation of the spiritual life; or, as Scripture expresses it, 'the only hope of salvation of all the ends of the earth.' To preach Christ is to preach duty; but to preach duty as connecting itself with, and as flowing from, the relation in which Christ stands to His believing people. To preach Christ is to preach doctrine; but to preach doctrine as valuable only so far as it indicates and leads on to the personal Saviour. To preach Christ is to show what Christ is, to unfold the greatness of His person, and the glory of His work, and to show, also, how He intertwines Himself with the life of the true disciple, supplying out of His own fulness the wisdom to know, and the courage to dare, and the strength to persevere, and the power to bear the cross in the footsteps of a cross-bearing Master. And, finally, to preach Christ is to speak of the magnificence and beauty of a sinless heaven; to tell of its streets of gold, and gates of pearl, and the voice of the multitude as the sound of many waters; and yet to place in the midst of the splendid scene the figure of the glorified Saviour, as the one source of happiness, and one centre of adoration and praise, to His redeemed and rejoicing people.

II. In the next place, we have to describe the manner of preaching Christ. The Apostle speaks of two methods. First warning, then teaching. We will consider these in order. Now, within the borders of the Christian Church, at the time when the Apostle wrote, there were doubtless some who professed the faith of Christ, but who had no real and vital connection with His sacred person. A second generation had here and there sprung up, and there would probably be children who inherited the religion of their parents without being touched by its power. And then there would be others (perhaps, a considerable number of them) who, like Simon Magus, like Ananias and Sapphira, had been induced by some transient impulse, or by some calculation as to worldly advantages, to join themselves to a community becoming daily more numerous and more influential, but who were in no manner of sympathy with the higher, nobler life, which the members of the community were expected to lead. If such were the case, we can easily understand the necessity that had arisen for loud and emphatic warning, on the part of the Christian preacher.

Men are slumbering, as the rich man in the parable slumbered: wrapt up in a false belief of their own security. speaking peace to themselves, when there is no peace, and if they are to be saved from the horror of such a fate as that which the rich man encountered, they must be awakened to a sense of their danger, by the sharp, piercing, shattering tones of the Christian peacher.

But besides warning, the Apostle speaks of teaching; and of teach-

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ing in all wisdom. Let us consider this point for a moment or two. A most important part of the office of the preacher is that of communicating instruction. Our Lord tells us that the instrument of sanctification is truth, God's truth. 'Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.' Or, to express it somewhat differently, light and life, knowledge and grace, are, in the kingdom of God, inseparably connected with each other; and no one can hope to make advances in godliness, unless he is at the pains to make advances in the knowledge of divine things. For this reason, then, it is part of our ministry to do what we can in the way of spiritual instruction. A man is set apart, out of a Christian community, for this purpose amongst others, in order that, devoting his time to the study of God's word, and to such other matters as conduce to the right understanding of it, he may lead his people on into an ever-deepening and broadening acquaintance with the divine truth. He need not be the cleverest man in the congregation, nor even the most spiritual. But he has this one thing given him to do, whilst his hearers are occupied in the week with many other things. And he may calculate (as we may well believe) upon special divine assistance, for so important a work. He appears emphatically as a teacher. He has to bring forth out of the treasures of the divine word things new and old. Nor is there to be any concealment, any reservation in his teaching. His duty is to declare the whole counsel of God, so far as he understands it himself; and thus, not only to warn his flock, when he has occasion to do so, but also to 'teach them in all wisdom.'

III. We come now to the last point, the object of our preaching: 'To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' This is something more, as you will observe, than to save every man. It is a great thing, to be the instrument, in God's hands, of bringing a fellow-creature to salvation; but when this is done, much more has to be done, the saved man has to be built up in the faith, so as to attain to what the Apostle calls 'perfection in Christ Jesus.' Scripture, as you will remember, recognises a growth in the believer. Beginning, as it were, as a child, he is to advance, through different stages, to the maturity of spiritual manhood. Born infants into the Church of Christ, we are not always to remain infants. There is to be continual progression. It is to this that the Apostle alludes, and he represents the object of his ministry to be, not merely to save men from this present evil world, but, when they are saved, to help them to attain the stature and the strength of the full-grown Christian. But what does the Apostle mean by the phrase 'presenting every man'? I think, indeed I have no doubt, that he alludes to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He and his flock will have to stand together before that awful throne. And he is determined to

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have to say for himself, 'Lord ! I did what in me lay to bring every soul committed to my charge to the knowledge of Thyself, and Thy truth. I strove to lead them up to the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus. And here I come before Thee, O God, after an honest and earnest endeavour to present every one who was committed to my charge perfect in Christ Jesus.'

To be able to say this in the great day is the desire of every true minister of the gospel.

CANON GORDON CALTHROP.

The Divinity of Work.

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. S. JOHN v. 17.

I. **W**ORK is not in itself the curse of man. Work was before the Fall: work shall be after the restoration. No curse which could have been devised for human sin would have been so formidable as that of a compulsory idleness. If God had sought only punishment, this might have been its nature; a perpetual and an inevitable inactivity. But God, 'even in wrath remembering mercy,' designed the curse of man to be remedial yet more than penal. And therefore He deprived him not of occupation. The punishment was not that labour should cease, but that labour should become (1) more severe, and (2) less productive. Hitherto employment had not passed into toil, nor work into pain; now 'in the sweat of thy face,' with effort more than moderate and exertion more than healthy, thou shalt oftentimes have to eat thy bread. Nor shall this excessive, this often painful toil be always remunerative. 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.' Labour shall too often be a disappointment: a man shall 'look for much, and bring in little.' Excessive toil shall also oftentimes be fruitless toil. In these two respects a curse has fallen upon labour. Work itself is salutary, is honourable, is blessed: but painful work, and fruitless work, is a memento of our degradation, a consequence of our fall.

Jesus answered them, 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work.' Toil may be human, but work is divine. Bear the one, and love the other.

II. 'And I work.' Yes, the work of the Son is even as the work of the Father. Truly His work on earth was as that of no other man. In the daytime there 'were many coming and going, and He had no leisure so much as to eat.' And as His days were given to toil, so His nights to prayer. For Him, as for us, yet far beyond us, earth was a place of toil.

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But what is heaven to Him? Does He rest there? Yes, 'in Thy presence is the fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' But that joy, that pleasure, is not found in inactivity. The life of Christ in heaven is a life of work. All that has been said of the Father has been said of Him. For is He not the doer of all the works of God? Has He not said, 'I and My Father are one'? Is it not He who 'made the worlds'? Is it not He who 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power'? Is it not He who hears and answers prayer, and ministers to His people of His Spirit? Is it not He, above all, who 'ever maketh intercession for us,' with a knowledge of want as minute as the power to relieve it is infinite?

Yes, it is not we only who have to work; our Saviour works, and our God works also. Weekday and Sunday, week by week, month by month, year by year, through years counted by the thousand and then not exhausted, has God Himself, the Father and the Son and the Spirit, set us the examples of the work to which He calls us. Never despise work as your reproach; never hate work as your curse. He who works not is contemptible; he who works not, high or low, rich or poor, has the mark of the curse, yea, of a curse which God never uttered, branded in fire upon his brow. Hand or head, there is that much of distinction and of difference, hand or head must work, in all of us, or we are mere 'cumberers of the ground, fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill.' And He who bids us work, works Himself. God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer, the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier, the very names show that each one works, yet more, far more, than we. Therefore let us look upward, and let us look onward! A day is coming when all of work that is bitter shall be done away; its over-toil, its scant reward. But work itself shall never end for the Christian. 'Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us with Thy mercy, and that soon: that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy-work!'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

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VI ILLUSTRATIONS

Bearing DISCOVERERS in the natural world frequently, for prudential reasons, keep silence as to their discoveries.
Testimony.
S. MARK When Galileo first turned his glass on the planet Saturn
vii. 31-40. he saw, as he thought, that it consisted of three spheres close together, the middle one being the largest. Being not quite sure of his fact, he was in a dilemma between his desire to wait longer for further observation, and his fear that some other observer might announce the discovery if he hesitated. To combine these, Galileo wrote a sentence, '*Altissimum planetam tergeminum observari*,' 'I have observed the highest planet to be triple.' He then jumbled the letters together and made the sentence into one long monstrous word, and published this, which contained his discovery, but under lock and key. He had reason to congratulate himself on his prudence, for within two years two of the supposed bodies disappeared, leaving only one; and for nearly fifty years Saturn continued to all astronomers the enigma which it was to Galileo, until in 1656 it was finally made clear that it was surrounded by a thin flat ring which, when seen fully, gave rise to the first appearance in Galileo's small telescope, and when seen edgeways disappeared from view altogether. With an instinct that makes the newly saved Christian long that others may share his joy, he, however, goes everywhere saying, 'We have found the Messiah: this is the Christ.'

Testimony. THE Christian religion appears in some degree strange to
S. MARK reason: but in history we have undoubted facts, against
vii. 31-40. which, in reasoning *à priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them: but then testimony has great weight and casts the balance (S. John viii. 17).

He who tells nothing exceeding the bounds of probability has a right to demand that they should believe him who cannot contradict him (1 Cor. xiii. 7).

Effective OF Felix Neff and Cesar Malan, M. de Goltz said: 'They
Testimony. possessed a power of faith, a spirit of prayer, and a
S. MARK courage of witness-bearing, which rendered their testi-
vii. 31-40. mony extraordinarily blessed. Powerful personalities, they carried the testimony of Jesus Christ wherever they went. They did not allow a walk or an accidental meeting to pass, or make a journey, without finding or forming an opportunity to speak of their Saviour.'

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, GALATIANS III. 16-22.
GOSPEL, S. LUKE X. 23-37.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . . . 2 KINGS VI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . . . 2 KINGS VI. 24 or 2 KINGS VII.
SECOND LESSONS, ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Naaman's Expectations.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage. 2 KINGS v. 11, 12.



NAAMAN the Syrian, the proud noble, the brave soldier, the afflicted leper, is in these several capacities a representative man. His peers, his comrades, his fellow-sufferers, may well have been proud of claiming his friendship. But it is not these particulars which should engage our attention most earnestly. Naaman, as he waits, disappointed and indignant, before the door of Elisha's house in Samaria, represents human nature in presence of some higher truth than it has yet mastered—in presence of revelation; and from this point of view he may be studied with no little advantage.

Let us, first of all, glance at his history. Naaman, I have already
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said, was a brave and skilful soldier. The Bible tells us that by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; and some recently discovered inscriptions make it at least probable that he had distinguished himself in a campaign by which the Syrians of Damascus were freed from the oppressive power of the Assyrian kings. The successful soldier naturally stood high in the favour of his sovereign, and in the opinion of his countrymen; but his life was embittered by the humiliating and painful disease, which in those ages was so prevalent throughout the East, and in which the Israelites had learnt to trace a material shadow or symbol of moral evil. Naaman's leprosy cannot have been of the severest type, or it would have interfered with his duties in the palace and in the camp—duties which, as it would seem, were never interrupted. Had he been an Israelite, his illness would have shut him out altogether from human society; but a pagan Syrian could still hold his position as a public man, although he must have felt keenly the distress and loathsomeness of his malady. It is plain, too, that his master, the king of Syria, felt and expressed strong sympathy with his distinguished officer, and that he was looking out for a remedy if one only could be had.

How then did Naaman, commanding the Syrian forces in Damascus, come to find himself waiting in the city of Samaria outside the door of a prophet of the Lord? The explanation is instructive because it shows the sort of channels along which, in all ages of the world's history, religious truth has filtered itself through the great fabric of human society, and it anticipates almost exactly what happened again and again in the earliest days of the Church of Christ. The Syrians, without being exactly at war with Israel, were on very bad terms with it ever since the failure of Ahab's expedition; and, from time to time, raids were made into the two territories from either side, and such booty as could be laid hands on was carried off. And, in one of these raids, the Syrians had carried away from her home a young Israelitish girl, who was now a slave in Naaman's palace, and in attendance upon his wife. Like Daniel, like Esther, like that late psalmist who has told us how by the waters of Babylon he sat down and wept, this maiden cherished a loving and tender memory of the religious blessings of her distant home. Often, no doubt, like another captive or exile, she would have exclaimed, 'Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Oh, put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks who is the help of my countenance, and my God.' In all ages there are persons who, without being slaves, live perforce in situations of dependence which often seem to cut them off from religious privileges, or from opportunities of religious usefulness. This is often the case with governesses, and, in another sense, with maid-servants among ourselves.

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Many such a one thinks it very hard to have to consult, at all times, the whims of a thoughtless mistress, and to pass what she deems an obscure and fruitless life. Depend upon it, where there is integrity of principle and simplicity of purpose, the time comes sooner or later for doing the act, or for saying the word, which gives dignity, greatness, sanctity, to any life, which redeems it altogether from being barren or commonplace. So it was with the little slave-girl in the palace of Naaman at Damascus. She saw day by day her master's sufferings uncured, and, so far as Syrian skill went, incurable. She had heard in her young days, in her beloved home, of the prophet who had succeeded Elijah, and who lived in great consideration and wielded immense authority in Samaria. She ventured to whisper to her mistress, in one of those moments of intimacy to which even slaves were not unfrequently admitted, that she wished her lord could only see the great prophet who dwelt in Samaria, and who, she felt sure, would cure the leprosy. Her words were repeated to Naaman, and Naaman in turn repeated them to the sovereign; and the king of Syria at once resolved to make the most of the suggestion. Naaman in person was ordered to leave at once for Samaria. He took with him money and presents, amounting to more than twelve thousand pounds of our money, and he was also the bearer of a letter which requested that the leper who bore it might be cured. The King of Israel himself was neither a physician nor a prophet, and he saw, or chose to see, in the despatch of the Syrian monarch, only one of those impossible demands with which ambitious sovereigns are wont to preface a declaration of war.

But Naaman's arrival, and all that had followed it, were reported to Elisha. With the freedom and authority of his great mission, he rebuked Jehoram for his unbelief and his alarm. Why could not Naaman be sent on to him that he might learn that there was a prophet in Israel? And so Naaman obeyed. The great Syrian left the palace of the monarch, and he drew up with his long line of horsemen, and in his splendid war chariot, before the humble dwelling of the prophet. He waited, expecting that the prophet who had invited him would at once appear. He waited, but, although the prophet was within, a servant only presented himself, and that not to invite him to enter Elisha's dwelling, but to bid him journey more than thirty miles across the country, and then bathe himself seven times in the stream of the Jordan. If he would do that, he would recover. It was this message which led to the outbreak of temper and language described in the text. 'Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah, his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and

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Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage.'

Here, I say, Naaman represents human nature, anxious to be blest by God's revelation of Himself, yet unwilling to take the blessing except on its own terms; for Naaman saw in Elisha, not merely, or chiefly, a master of the healing art, but the exponent or prophet of a religion which was, he dimly felt, higher and diviner than any he had encountered before. Like the sculptor of what is called the Moabite Stone, heathen though he was, Naaman was acquainted with the sacred name of Israel's God, and, indeed, he expected that Elisha would cure him by invoking that name. And thus, you observe, his bearing has a distinctly religious interest, and his treatment of Elisha's message has been repeated, and is repeated continually, under other circumstances, by thousands upon thousands of human beings. And our business is not to judge a man who, with scanty advantages, failed on a critical occasion in temper and in judgment, failed when dealing with a very serious subject. But his conduct, like all else in Holy Scripture, was certainly written for our learning, and we shall do well to see how far he may possibly have anticipated some of either our temptations or our actual failings in the great work of dealing with religious truth.

I. In Naaman's language, then, we see, first of all a sense of humiliation and wrong. Naaman feels himself slighted. He had been accustomed at the brilliant court of Damascus to receive a great deal of deference and consideration, more, probably, than any one else, except the monarch himself. He had made a long journey into what he probably considered a vassal kingdom; and here one of its religious ministers treats him as if he were in a position of clearly marked inferiority. 'Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me.' And Elisha's conduct cannot reasonably be ascribed to the legal prohibition of intercourse with lepers, or to any wish to magnify the miracle in the eyes of Naaman, still less to any fear of infection. Elisha divined Naaman's state of mind. He knew what was the first lesson that Naaman needed to learn. Elisha acted as the minister of Him who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. It is so in our own day. Here, for instance, is a man who feels instinctively that Christianity can give him that which, in a lasting form, is attainable nowhere else, purity in his heart, peace in his soul. The man has tried Syria in all its forms, society, philosophy, pleasure, every kind of occupation; but there the sore remains. He has heard that Israel's true prophet still cures the leper, and he, too, comes for the remedy. But then he comes to Jesus Christ our Lord in an easy confident spirit, just as though he were doing the gospel a good turn

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by conferring upon it the distinction of his splendid patronage. He comes for a blessing, no doubt, but then he believes himself to be giving something like an equivalent. He comes, in short, in his inmost heart to treat with our Lord as if he were a sort of equal, not to bend utterly before the Holiest as a repentant sinner. And, therefore, the first duty which religion has to discharge towards him, is to convince him of the true state of the case. He has to be undeceived as to his own condition : he has to learn that he, as all else have, has sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that, if justified at all, they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Certainly Christianity does not take a flattering view of fallen human nature. The first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans stand at the portal of the very fullest statement which we have in the whole of the New Testament of our Lord's redemptive work ; and when men are going about to establish their own natural righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God, when they are forgetting or slurring over the moral evil which has established a barrier between themselves and the All-Holy, when they would deal with Christianity just as if it were only a philosophy, truer, no doubt, and more comprehensive, and more adequate to deal with the facts, as they say, than other philosophies, but not entitled to set up a tribunal of judgment within the conscience, or to investigate and probe the secrets of the heart, then the message which is sent out to them runs thus, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and knowest not that thou art miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and to anoint thy eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.'

II. And we see, secondly, in Naaman's language, the demand which human nature often makes for the sensational element in religion. Naaman expected an interview with the prophet that should be full of dramatic and striking incident. He knew perfectly well how the priests and magicians of his native Syria would have acted had they possessed a tithe of Elisha's power. They would have set it off by all the arts that could possibly impress the imagination. 'I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah, his God, and move his hand' (so it is, quite literally) 'up and down over the place, and recover the leper.' And, instead of this, how tame and prosaic and businesslike is the proceeding! Naaman, the great prince and soldier, is put off with a curt message. He is told, just as any peasant might be told, to bathe seven times

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in the stream of the Jordan—a proceeding which was open to all the world besides. If the prophet had bidden him attempt some great thing, something corresponding to what he believed to be the general proportions of his station and his character, something verging upon the limits of the superhuman and the impossible, would he not have done, or tried to do it? Of course he would. But to drive some thirty miles across the hills in order to bathe in the national river of Israel at the end of the drive—the proposal was too commonplace: it was simply intolerable.

And here, I say, Naaman is human nature in all countries and all times. The striking, the impressive, the sensational, as a test of truth, are as much in request here and now as they were in Elisha's day in Samaria. A man is feeling his way, I again suppose, towards practical Christianity. He has lived on excitement all his life, and he expects still to find that which will gratify it to the full, although in another shape, at the door of the Church of Christ. It is a sort of necessity of his nature; and if he is not greeted by something that is exceptional and brilliant, he is quite prepared to go away in a rage, and then he is almost necessarily disappointed. 'I thought,' he says to himself, 'I thought that he whom I am seeking to cure me of my leprosy would surely come out to me, presenting himself in some splendid literature, in some world-wide, spotless, undivided Church, proclaiming truth by voices of matchless eloquence, inviting to worship by ceremonies of graceful and imposing magnificence. And yet, what is the case? The world which I have left does better, and after my experience of its charms I find the Church tame and insipid. Compare its hesitating, its stilted utterances,' he continues, 'with the freedom, with the resource, with the bold and fearless impetuosity, of worldly genius lavishing itself over the fields of poetry and philosophy, taking the human mind captive by its many-sided attractiveness. Compare its feeble, its unconnected and often disorganised or self-neutralising action, with the decision and the power which characterise the work of great worldly potentates and representative statesmen. Nay, how little do its most characteristic rites respond to the just expectations of my soul!' It is a hard thing when a man is waiting to be touched by the fire of prophetic utterance, that he should be sent in an official way (no doubt Naaman thought so), to bathe seven times in the stream of the Jordan. It is hard when a man is expecting some new and brilliant theory that shall take account, in its majestic compass, of all the facts that disturb, or that are supposed to disturb, all the possible relations of religion and philosophy, to be told simply, in the old way, that the blood of the atonement alone cleanses, and that the water in the font is still efficacious. So men speak. It is the voice of Naaman: it is the voice of human nature, which expects that

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when it is in contact with revealed religion, it must necessarily find the sensational.

No doubt at times, true religion does, to a certain extent, in condescension to our weakness, meet this deep craving of our nature. They who witnessed the Transfiguration, or the Ascension, or the tongues of fire as they descended on the day of Pentecost, they who heard S. Paul speak on the strand at Miletus, or who listened to the speakers in the mystic languages at Corinth, or who in the first fervour of their conversion would have plucked out their eyes and given them to the Apostle who had brought them to the feet of Christ, they, assuredly, must have felt in varying degrees something of its power. And it is undeniable that, again and again, in the later ages of Christendom, vast enthusiasms have swept over the Christian populations, that Elisha has, as it were, come out to the door of his house, and has passed his hand again and again rapidly over the sores of society, and has recovered the leper. But, on the whole, the strength of revealed religion is seen in its power of dispensing with efforts of this kind, for its force resides, not in the earthquake which occasionally shakes, not in the fire which at times consumes the heart of the Church, but in the still small voice which speaks to conscience. The power of producing a great sensation is no test of truth or of goodness. The power of controlling passion and of quickening conscience is a test. But then this is achieved in quietness and confidence, achieved often most successfully in the discharge of routine duties, in the formation and the strengthening of quiet and deep convictions, in that inner life of affection for our Lord which risks its excellence by rude exposure, by eager demonstrativeness. An early Communion, where ten or twelve assemble in the twilight to receive the Sacrament of the Divine Redemption, is likely, often, to be much more useful than attendance at an evening sermon in a crowded church.

III. And, once more, Naaman represents prejudiced attachment to early associations, coupled, as it often is, with a jealous impatience of anything like exclusive claims put forward on behalf of the truths or ordinances of a religion which we are for the first time attentively considering. Naaman will forget the prophet's disappointing reserve. His mind rests for a moment on the prophet's command. What is he to do? He is to bathe, it appears, in some distant stream, and then the leprosy will disappear. Will not the rivers of his native Syria suffice, the clear, cool stream of the Abana or Barada, rushing down from the Antilibanus, and forming the oasis on which his native Damascus is built, or, farther to the south, the Pharpar, flowing from the plain into the desert lake? If the cure is to depend on any such conditions at all, why will not these historic waters

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achieve it? Why must he be asked to bathe in the turbid and muddy brook which he had passed on the road to Samaria, and which was bound up with the history of an alien race? 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?' Few things can be more precious than early associations when we have been nurtured, through God's mercy, in a Christian home, and when memory treasures up actions and persons on whom Christ our Lord has shed the light of His countenance. But it is otherwise when this unspeakable blessing has been denied us, when the heart has given of its freshest and its best to that which is erroneous or is wrong. Then, if we ever reach the door of Elisha's house, there is an inevitable struggle, and men ask why grace, of which, as yet, they know so little is, after all, so efficacious and so necessary; and they ask why nature, of which they may or may not really know more, cannot do the work of cleansing them from their defilement. 'Look at nature,' they say, 'look at its beauty, its freedom, its resource. Can it be the impotent, the fruitless thing that you say? Has it not its points of superiority to the hard, stiff, formal teaching of your theologians? Are not the green fields better than the close air and the dingy aspect of your churches? Is not a good library, or a brilliant conversation, or a scientific lecture, more to the purpose than your dull and uninteresting sermons? Why are we to believe that your sacraments are the especial channels of any regenerative efficacy, that a little water and a few words can make, as your catechism says, 'a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven'? High intellectual gifts, a great moral ascendancy, these things, we believe it, these things may compass the regeneration of the world. For the rest, it has been well said that a good national literature is much more to the purpose than all or any of the gifts of Christ.'

Nature, no doubt, can do much. We may admit it, because all that is great, beautiful, productive, in nature, comes most assuredly, like the gifts of grace, from the good God, the fountain of all goodness. But nature can no more rise above its level than water can. Nature can civilise, undoubtedly: that is one thing. It cannot regenerate: that is quite another. He who made us can alone remake us; and He is perfectly free to choose the channel of this His last, His choicest gift. He might have made the Syrian waters the means of His healing power; He might have denied for ever any efficacy to the waters of the Jordan. There was no physical quality inherent in the Jordan water that wrought the cure. The cure was wrought by the Divine Will connecting its efficacy with this one particular instrument. Of themselves neither Syrian nor Jewish streams had, let me repeat, any healing

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properties at all. By a particular choice, God made the Jewish river the means whereby His healing virtue was to be dispensed to Naaman. The question is not whether man's natural life in thought and action has not a force and a splendour that is all its own. Of course it has. The question is whether anything in it can render unnecessary or superfluous that stupendous act of power and of love which was achieved on Mount Calvary. Of itself, a little water applied to a child's forehead, while a few words are repeated at the moment, could not possibly convey any spiritual gift. To suppose this would be simply to believe in a material charm. But if, choosing this out of a thousand possible acts or symbols, He to whom all power is given in earth and heaven, has, indeed, attached to it a specific spiritual efficacy, then, I say, the case is utterly different. Nature may be, in itself, more graceful, more fertile, more persuasive. She is comparatively powerless to touch, to remould, the soul of man, because she lacks that which gives power to that which in themselves are weak and beggarly elements: she lacks the chartered presence of the world's Redeemer, the presence of Christ.

IV. But to go, lastly, to the root of the matter. Naaman's fundamental mistake consisted in his attempt to decide at all how the prophet should work the miracle of his cure. He plainly, in reason, had no means of doing this. He only knew, or had reason to suppose, that the religion of Israel was higher and diviner than his own. He came to it for that which his own could not give him, and he, suppliant and leper as he was, was in no position to determine what would or would not be appropriate action or advice on the part of its ministers. If it did its work, if he obtained the cure he needed, that would be enough. To decide upon its method of procedure was beyond his power. Yet how often is this fundamental mistake repeated! Men who know themselves to be lepers, who have lived all their lives far on the wrong side of the frontier of the Christian Church, and who, at last, through God's mercy have come to it for that which neither civilisation nor culture can possibly give them, men who have come, it may be, thus far, at very considerable sacrifices, with their ten talents of silver and their six thousand pieces of gold and their ten changes of raiment, men who have discovered that a Jehoram, a mere worldly compromise with religion, cannot help them, and have pushed their way on resolutely, persistently, to the very door of Elisha, yet, strangely, they conceive themselves able to determine what their great benefactor ought to do in order to achieve their cure. Christian evidences, they say, ought to be mathematical: moral evidence will not do. Christian doctrine must include these elements: it must exclude those. Christian worship must either be the exaggeration of slovenliness, or the exaggeration of ceremony. Christian

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philanthropy must make a compact with our political economy. Christian philosophy must come to an understanding with this or that writer who is at issue with its first postulates. Christian morals must have an eye to detail, and yet must avoid becoming casuistry. Christianity as a whole must respond to our expectations without violently exceeding them. In short, Christ must come out to meet the man; He must stand; He must move His hand, just as the man desires, over the place, and must recover the leper.

Do I say that Naaman has no duties except those simple submission? Do I say that there are no conditions with which a faith claiming to come from God must comply in order to claim the allegiance of the human soul? Far from it. Apart from the evidence which lead a man up to faith, there are two tests of a true revelation which can never be dispensed with. It must not contradict the highest, purest, clearest voice of natural conscience: it must not contradict itself. Our sense of primarily moral truth is just as much God's voice as His revelation of truth without us. He cannot unsay without what He has already told us within. Our conscience, of course, may be misinformed. We must look to that: it is a grave matter. But if, for instance, it were true that the doctrine of the atonement contradicted the true idea of justice, not of justice between one creature and another creature, but of a very different thing, justice as between the creature and the Creator, then that would be a reason for rejecting the doctrine. And if we are told that a series of teachers who, unless history is worthless, contradict each other on important points, are all equally infallible, that certainly is a reason for distrusting the system which makes the assertion. But beyond this, in the purely spiritual and supernatural sphere, we are not at all able to say beforehand what a religion coming from God ought to do, ought to teach, ought to be like. The finite cannot measure the Infinite or His work. To attempt to do this is to be exposed sooner or later to the shock of certain disappointment. A German poet satirises the writers of his day who say practically, 'What I could have done had I only been the Christ!' And an Apostle, when he closes his account of the dispensation of mercy, exclaims, 'Oh, the depth of the riches both of the mercy and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!'

Naaman, we know, thought better of it. After his recovery he showed that he had a grateful and a simple heart by returning to Samaria, by making his acknowledgments to Elisha, by making his profession of faith in Elisha's God. And the general lesson of his history is plain. We are lepers; we need the healing virtue that goes forth from our Lord and Saviour, however, whenever, through

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whomsoever, He may bestow it. We know that He, the true prophet of all the ages, heals souls in the midst of Israel. We know that His Blood cleanses, that His Spirit sanctifies, that there are appointed channels of His grace and His power. If we are satisfied that the general evidence for this revelation of love and mercy is at all sufficient to live by, to rest upon in life and in death, do not let us dream of the folly of improving upon His work in detail, of asking for, or of creating, new organs of infallibility, or of depreciating old and assured means of sharing His redemptive grace. It is unpractical as well as irreverent to discuss what has been settled by the Infinite Wisdom, and therefore settled irrevocably. The true scope of our activity is to make the most, the very most, day by day, of His bounty and His love that by His healing and strengthening grace we, too, may be cured of our leprosy, may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal.

H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

‘The Blessing of Abraham.’

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. GAL. iii. 16.



So we proceed from week to week along the Sundays after Trinity, every one seems to open to us some new view of the loving-kindness of God, urging the same upon us as constraining motives to serve Him with something of the same love to Him and to each other. And so it is to-day. S. Paul, in the epistle, is explaining to the Galatians that ‘the blessing of Abraham’ comes not on the Jews as such, but on all of us, as we are in Christ.

‘To Abraham,’ he says, ‘and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to his seeds, as of many’; the word of promise speaks not of the many families of the Jews, born on the stock of Abraham, but speaks ‘as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ’; to Christ the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, and in whose body, being one, are contained all the faithful.

But, again, the Jews supposed that through the fulfilment of the Law, which came in so long after, they should inherit this blessing of Abraham; this then the Apostle proceeds to answer. ‘And this

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I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ,' in giving the promise to Abraham, 'the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.' For the inheritance of the kingdom is given to us at our baptism, as being in Christ; it is a free gift, according to the promise made to Abraham. 'For if the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.'

'Wherefore then serveth the Law?' the Jew will ask. 'It was added,' says S. Paul, 'because of transgression'; it was as a bridle placed upon the Jews, to restrain their wickedness, and that too only for a time; 'till the seed shall come,' he says, 'to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator.' The Law itself was dispensed by the ministering spirits of Christ, who Himself was before the Law, and gave the Law as the great Mediator between God and man. For He spake there by means of angels and prophets, not as in the gospel by Himself. 'Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.' A free gift without conditions, requires no mediator; but the Law was through a mediator between God and man. A mediator implies two persons. God Himself is but one; the other party must be man therefore, and his part was to be performed, which was obedience. For a mediation cannot be like a promise, dependent on one party only.

'Is the Law then against the promises of God?' Does it by bringing in the curse of disobedience stop the promised blessing, and cut off the Jew who lived under the Law? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. For the Law never could under any circumstances have given life; and, therefore, its non-fulfilment cannot destroy the promise of life. 'But the Scripture hath concluded,' hath shut up together, all, not all men, but more, all things, the whole creation, 'under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.' The Law was to convince them of sin, and bring them to Christ; thus John the Baptist preached repentance; if they had believed Moses they would have believed in Christ. The Law was but the means, not the end; but the Jews were now making it the end; whereas the end of the Law is Christ, in whom is the promise, and the blessing, and the covenant, and righteousness, and life; not for a time only, but for ever. It was to this the prophets of old looked, to this the saints of the elder covenant aspired, to behold Christ, the end of the Law, in whom dwells the fulness of all good, the love of God flowing down from heaven and embracing all men; as the fragrant oil that came down on the head of Aaron and went to the skirts of his clothing.

ISAAC WILLIAMS.

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III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Eternal Life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he, answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. S. LUKE x. 25-28.



HERE is no one of the Apostles who dwells so much upon this commandment as S. John. He dwells upon it in that character. He does not speak of love to God or our neighbour as raising us above commandments. It is His commandment—the commandment—that we should love. In this commandment, he says, there is life; it carries with it the power of fulfilling it, because it proceeds from the Almighty Father—because it comes to us through Him who has fulfilled it.

I. A lawyer stood up and tempted Christ, saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Eternal life! Yes, that must be the highest of all gifts. How could it be earned? What sacrifices could be costly enough to win it? Had not Jesus some special rules for obtaining it? No, apparently none. He refers the lawyer to his own books. What is written there? The student and interpreter of the Scriptures considers. Some very remarkable words occur to his mind in the Book of Deuteronomy, words about loving the Lord God with all the heart and soul and strength, words about loving one’s neighbour as one’s-self. Perhaps those were the words in the Law which Jesus meant. Perhaps the lawyer had heard that He often referred to those words. Yes, the quotation was an apposite one. He had found out the way to eternal life. ‘This do, and thou shalt live.’ Had he done this, then? The question was a painful one to the lawyer’s conscience. There was a way out of it. The law did not define the neighbour—who is he?

II. You know what story was the answer to this question. We call it the story of the Good Samaritan. We could not, perhaps, give it a better name. But why was the Samaritan good? Did his country give him some advantage over the Levite and the priest? Did his faith? Did something specially blessed in his own individual

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nature? If his goodness could be referred to any one of these causes, he was no example to the Jew—the lawyer could not be fairly bidden to ‘go and do likewise.’ No! But that commandment which the lawyer found in the Book of Deuteronomy—that law of loving the neighbour as himself—had been written in the heart of the Samaritan. He confessed that he was bound by it. Therefore he took account of the man who was by the wayside, though he had come from Jerusalem to Jericho, though he was of an alien and hostile race, though those of his own race did not esteem him their neighbour. Therefore he sate him upon his own beast; therefore he poured oil and wine into his wounds; therefore he took care of him. He made no pretence to exalted virtue; he did not ask for any reward. He did the things which a voice within him bade him do. He yielded to a law, but it was a law of love, a law of liberty, and in that law there was life.

III. The lesson is keen and pointed; it strikes its roots deeply; they spread themselves far. The Samaritan heretic obeys the divine law in its largest sense; the strict Jew breaks it in its most limited and narrow sense. But it is a law to one as much as the other. The notion of love or charity as a self-indulgence, as the mere following of a kindly impulse, is as foreign to the New Testament as to the Old. God commands, man only obeys; this is equally the doctrine of both. But from what God does the command come? How is it to be obeyed? Christ shows forth in Himself what the God is from whom the command comes—how it is to be obeyed. The Son does what the Father wills to be done. All the acts of the Son are acts of willing self-sacrifice—acts of service to mankind. These are the acts by which He pays homage to His Father, in which He reveals His Father. To be moulded into conformity with His will, to have the Spirit of the Father and the Son who alone can mould us—this is the blessing of all blessings. This is that which prophets and kings longed for. To have this gift is the privilege of all, for Christ has died and risen and ascended; to accept it and live under the law of love—this is what we shall find to be the true, the eternal life, when we have been stripped of all our own pretensions, when we are content to receive all things from the Son of Man. This life is not a reward for keeping the commandment. In keeping the commandment you will possess it, you will enjoy it. If we did love God with all our hearts and soul and strength and mind, if we did love our neighbour as ourselves, we should have the divine, perfect life, the life of the eternal God. We should want nothing more, we could have nothing more. Let us think of this as we kneel at God’s altar. The infinite eternal charity is all gathered up in the sacrifice which Christ made for the world. The

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eternal life is shown forth in His death. We are permitted, we are invited, to partake of that Sacrifice, to eat the Flesh and Blood. We are permitted then, we are invited, to lay hold of eternal life. We do lay hold of it if we obey those commandments which the Samaritan, who had so little of our light, obeyed when he treated his enemy, the Jew, as his brother. For then we confess that a God of charity rules us and rules the universe; then we ask Him to forgive us all our breaches of charity, and to fill us with His charity, since we have none of our own.

F. D. MAURICE.

The Good Samaritan.

Who is my neighbour? S. LUKE x. 29.

THE parable which follows this, that of the Good Samaritan, is the answer to this question. It tells us that the enemy of our country may be our neighbour, so may the sectary who differs from us in religion; such a man may be our neighbour, as when we need, he may show us charity, whilst the ministers of our religion, who are teachers of the love of God and of our neighbour, may pass us by without stirring hand or foot to help us.

I. 'By chance there came down a certain priest that way.' If he was going to Jerusalem, he would most probably be going up to take part in the service of God. If he was coming from Jerusalem, he had most probably taken part in that service. Whose service? The service of Him whose tender mercy is over all His works. The service of Him who said respecting strangers, 'He loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger.' And yet he passed by on the other side.

II. Almost all commentators give the same spiritual or typical meaning. The wounded man is human nature. The robbers are the powers of evil. The Priest and the Levite are the law and the prophets, utterly powerless, as we have seen in the Epistle. The Lord Himself is the Good Samaritan, who took our nature upon Him to heal it. He brought us to a place of comparative safety, even His Church. He put us under His ministry, He gave us His Word and His Sacraments. And if there was anything else needful, He would have given it. So that He Himself had set the example of the most fervent charity before He uttered this parable. 'Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God' (1 S. John iv. 7).

H. F. SADLER.

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The Good Samaritan.

Who is my neighbour? S. LUKE X. 29.

I. **L**IKE all our Saviour's parables, this was probably suggested, if not by any outward incident, at least by the circumstances of the time and country, possibly, of the very place, in which it was delivered. We are not told by the Evangelist where he was when the lawyer questioned Him; but immediately afterwards we are told that He entered into the village of Martha and Mary. That village (as we well know) was Bethany. Bethany was the mountain hamlet which stood at the head of that great descent from Jerusalem to Jericho which is the scene of the parable which He now delivered. If, as we may suppose, He was advancing up the road which He so often trod, leading from the deep valley of the Jordan to the high country of Judea, the country which lay before Him would easily suggest the whole circumstances of the story. It is a steep mountain pass, descending for nearly four thousand feet; but, unlike the mountain passes with which we are familiar, it is enlivened by no verdure, it is cheered by no spring of living water. Bethany is the last human habitation before you descend into that deep abyss of bare precipice and rugged mountain. Far below lies the desert plain of the Jordan, broken only by the track of vegetation which follows the course of the river; and from that desert plain, and behind those rugged rocks, came forth, and have come forth in all times, those savage robbers of the wild Arabian tribes who have made the road from the earliest times known as the Bloody Way. But, unlike many of the waste places of the earth, it was a road which, in spite of its dangers and desolation, at the time of which our Lord spoke, was a necessary thoroughfare between two great and flourishing cities. Jerusalem at the head of the pass, and Jericho at its foot, were both important seats of government, of religion, and of commerce. The one as the capital of Judea, the other, as the favourite residence of the Herodian family, and also as one of the chief stations of the Priests and Levites, and as producing in the rich gardens which grew up in the tropical heat of its beautiful oasis some of the chief articles of luxury to the surrounding countries. It was along this road then that a certain man 'went down from Jerusalem to Jericho,' and it was in the midst of this wilderness that the fate which has there so often befallen the solitary traveller overtook him on his journey. He 'fell among thieves' (as we should say 'among robbers'), the Arabian robbers of whom I

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have before spoken, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them; who still render it necessary for every pilgrim who passes that way to go with an armed escort, on his road to the Jordan. They overpowered him in a moment; they stripped off his clothes, as is still their wont; they beat him cruelly, and they vanished again amid the desert rocks, leaving him half dead in the glare of the Syrian sun, reflected from the white cliffs of the mountain pass on this side and on that.

II. How impossible it is to read the story without being reminded of the incidents which may occur to any one of us in our passage through the world, whether on our actual travels or on that longer journey, that deep descent, that steep ascent, from Jerusalem to the Jordan, from the Jordan to Jerusalem, in which we are all engaged between our birth and our death! How many are the sufferers who have fallen amongst misfortunes along the wayside of life! 'By chance' we come that way; chance, accident, Providence, call it by what name we will, has thrown them in our way; we see them from a distance, like the Priest, or we come upon them suddenly like the Levite; our business, our pleasure, is interrupted by the sight, is troubled by the delay; what are our feelings, what our actions towards them? The Priest and the Levite may have had good reasons for hurrying on; they may have been hastening to services, which they could not postpone, to duties which would not allow them to endanger their lives. The parable blames them not. It leaves us to ask whether we should have done likewise, it leaves us to determine who are most to be admired. They who did as we should all naturally do, they who would not be put out of their way, they who thought it beneath the notice of religious men to do a homely deed of kindness, they who thought it imprudent to mix themselves up with a matter which was no concern of theirs; or he who had compassion on the wounded man, he who administered comfort and support, he who broke off his journey, who for the sake of a stranger did that which kinsmen declined to do. The Priest and the Levite are types of likenesses of men as they commonly are; thinking much of themselves, and little of others; with much prudence, much foresight, it may be, but with little sympathy, little power of self-denial. Let them go on their way. Judge them not harshly. Judge them not more harshly than we should venture to judge ourselves. But let us remember that there is a higher type of character, a better standard of the true Christian traveller than this. The good deed of the Good Samaritan has still a fragrant odour in all the world; may it be ours, if God throws like opportunities in our paths, to be enabled to share his blessing, and go and do likewise!

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But this general lesson of benevolence to the distressed, of attendance on the sick and afflicted, of seizing opportunities of good as eagerly as we are accustomed to seize opportunities of pleasure; this, though a great lesson of the parable, is not its only, or even its chief, lesson. The immediate question to which it was an answer was, not 'What is my duty to my neighbour?' but 'Who is my neighbour?' And the answer was given not the less precisely for its being given indirectly. The lawyer—that is, as we should call him the expounder and teacher of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament—he thought doubtless, when he spoke of 'loving his neighbour as himself,' that it was enough if he thereby bound himself to love those with whom he agreed, those of his own country, of his own church, of his own persuasion. Nor would it have been a sufficient lesson for him, if the parable had been so turned, that the act of mercy should have been performed by a good Jew towards an afflicted stranger, even though that stranger were a Samaritan. This is not enough to open the narrow heart or to enlighten the blinded mind; even the most uncharitable are well content to admire and approve even acts of comprehensiveness and toleration if they are performed by those with whom we ourselves agree. But what we shrink from acknowledging, and what this parable forced the lawyer, and through him forces us, to acknowledge, is this, that acts of goodness may be done by those from whom we differ; that even those from whom we differ, even those who like the Samaritan are outcasts and aliens from the outward Church of God, and 'worship they know not what,' may yet be endowed with a higher grace and gifted with nobler gifts than those who like the Priest and Levite 'stand day and night in the sanctuary,' and 'rest in the law and make a boast of God, and know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, and have the form of knowledge and of truth.' Who as he reads this parable will not feel that he had rather cast his lot with the Good Samaritan than with the Priest and Levite? Who will not feel in like manner, as he casts his eye backward over the history of the Church, or as he studies the signs of our own times, that he had far better meet the judgment of his Redeemer, loaded with the errors of many a heretic, than with the sins of many a champion of the true faith?

III. 'Who is my neighbour?' The question has received its answer. It is, we have observed, a threefold answer. 'Who is thy neighbour?' First, it is the sufferer, wherever, whoever, whatsoever he be. Wherever thou hearest the cry of distress; wherever thou seest any one struck down by the injustice, the oppression, the licentiousness, the selfishness of men; wherever thou seest any one brought across thy path by the chances and changes of life, that is,

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by the Providence of God, whom it is in thy power to help—he, stranger or enemy though he be,—he is thy neighbour.

A. P. STANLEY.

Who is my Neighbour?

Who is my neighbour? S. LUKE x. 29.

I. **T**HIS memorable question strikes the key-note of the most picturesque and most practical of the parables, a parable which has probably done more than anything that could be named to inspire active and self-denying charity; and, as we listen to it again to-day, we may well ask to what it owes its surpassing power, its endearing hold over the hearts of men. Not to that element of adventure which impresses the young imagination, and makes the parable of the Good Samaritan the favourite parable of childhood; not to anything in the mere framework and colouring of the story, perfect as these are, but truly to the fact that Christ here appeals to a deep and sacred instinct of the human soul, that He touches that common heart of humanity which thrills to those realities of sorrow or of joy felt to be the common inheritance of all: its interest endures in virtue of that holy bond which grows out of sympathies immortal as our own spirits. It is to this instinct that Christ has made His appeal. His 'new commandment,' put into imperishable example by His own life and death, was intended to stir and quicken it, to convert it into the guiding principle of life. The instinct was already there. It was, indeed, as S. John says, 'no new commandment' when Christ set forth love as the master motive, but the old commandment which men had from the beginning written on their heart by the very finger of God. Christ's adoption and expansion of it has been well compared to the modern application of electricity of any kind to beneficent ends and to the secrets of our daily life. Just as certain electrical phenomena had been familiar for ages to the rude Indian of the far west and applied by him to his childish needs, while yet the grand capacities of some of these phenomena were unsuspected and unrevealed, so the profound utilisation of the principle and of its extension by Christ to all persons and all possible circumstances of life, is truly and properly a new commandment, a discovery, a gospel, a revelation. Now if we would realise the boldness and the originality of our Lord's exposition of the word 'neighbour,' we must place ourselves by an effort of imagination under the influence of that spirit which He found at work in this world. It was nothing short

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of a miraculous change when from the midst of the most bigoted and insular of nations there went forth the announcement of universal brotherhood. When Christ appeared among men selfishness was probably at its height. All the civilised world over, the natural kindness and fellow-feeling of men had been long repressed by low and cynical maxims. The Gentile sneered at the Jew for his intolerance and for the exclusiveness of his charity.

II. The Roman satirist said that no Jew would tell a traveller the way unless he was of his own persuasion. Yet what the Gentile understood by human brotherhood we may learn from the language of the best and wisest among them, who thanked heaven that he was born a man and not a brute, a Greek, that is, and not a barbarian; and Plato congratulated the Athenians on having shown in their foreign policy beyond all other Greeks, a power and hearty hatred of the foreign nature. The Jew to whom the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' had come direct from heaven, had gradually narrowed down the word 'neighbour,' till it meant his fellow-countrymen, and at last his personal friend, so that a rabbinical gloss had become current, and was quoted by Christ, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.' That larger comprehensiveness of spirit of which we had an example in Elisha's cure of the Syrian general was rare indeed. The true moral of that cure had apparently been lost, for Christ, you remember, had to draw it out anew. He showed that it was in reality a protest against excessive privilege, an anticipation of the great gospel theory of neighbourhood, a sign that the quality of the divine mercy was 'not strained.' There were many lepers in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet, He said, but these had no monopoly of the prophet's power. Nay, says our Lord, none of them was healed save Naaman the Syrian.

III. The parable of the Good Samaritan grew, like others, out of an apparently casual incident in the course of our Lord's daily ministry. A lawyer, we are told, stood up to tempt Him, to put Him to the test by means of the most crucial question that could be addressed to a religious teacher. There was, however, no malignant animus on the part of the inquirer; there was no reason to suppose that he was not sincere and well-disposed. He may not indeed have been deeply concerned about his religious spirit, or profoundly conscious of spiritual need; professional curiosity may have largely mingled with genuine desire for higher good when he put that question, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' The reply which he receives is profoundly suggestive; it amounts in fact to this: 'Your inquiry has been answered; it is answered in that very law of which you are the accredited teacher and expounder; how dost thou

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read it?' That the lawyer should at once summarise the law into the two great commandments gave proof of a spiritual insight rare in his class, and our Lord accepts his answer as perfectly correct and perfectly adequate. His knowledge of duty, He tells him, was all that could be desired; it only remained for him to put that knowledge into practice: 'Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.' And this advice it is that touches the lawyer's conscience, this injunction to live up to what he knows finds him out; he feels at once that his fulfilment of the law of love has lagged far behind his theory. Yet he would fain justify himself if possible. If he has been remiss in the display of love to his neighbour, it has been from mere ignorance or uncertainty; it has been owing to the difficulty of fixing the precise extension of that word neighbour. Whom did it include? Where was the line to be drawn? Who had a claim to his love? Who had none?

It has been wisely said that the question he now puts, 'Who is my neighbour?' like S. Peter's question, 'How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?' was not merely a question which might receive a wrong answer, but a question wrong in itself, involving, that is, a wrong condition of mind, out of which alone it could have proceeded. The man who asked, 'Whom shall I love?' betrayed a radical misconception of the command by which he professed to live; and, therefore, it was that our Lord so framed the parable which embodied His answer as to divert the lawyer's thoughts from the recipient to the giver. His own attitude, his own state of heart, was the chief thing. He had asked, 'Who is my neighbour?' to whom, that is, am I bound to show love? But the parable only incidentally answers that question. It is a direct answer to quite a different and a far more salutary question, Who is my neighbour—he who shows love or he who shows it not? The lawyer would fain have had our Lord define for him the precise marks by which he was to identify the proper object of his love; he expected to be told within what exact limits of kindred or of religious creed he was to look out for his neighbour; and our Lord portrays a man who takes no account whatever of these limits—a man who, in the nobility and freedom of his love, completely overlooks them; to make the lesson more striking, a man of a despised and alien race who, in the enthusiasm of his humanity, asks no questions, ministers lavishly with the heart and hand to the desperate need of one who is for him simply a brother man and no more.

IV. It would not be easy to exhaust the teaching, more or less obvious, which this parable contains; but its main unmistakable lesson, brought straight home by Christ to the heart of his interrogator, 'Go and do likewise,' which of us has truly thought that out? Which

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of us has pondered in all its aspects that Good Samaritan's act of mercy, his noble promptitude, his superiority to inveterate prejudice, his disregard of his own bodily peril (for that was involved), his sacrifice of his own time, and means, and personal comfort, the pains he was at to provide for all the contingencies, and to make the help he gave thoroughgoing and complete? 'Go and do thou likewise.' The act which our Lord describes implies a love and requires a spirit of which we can all recognise the duty, but of which few will dare to think themselves capable. But this parable has set the standard of Christian philanthropy, at which we all profess to aim. We accept Christ's definition of our duty to our neighbour; we admit no limitation to the range of Christian love; we profess to behold in every man, no matter how far separated from us in blood, or creed, or sympathy, one who has a claim upon us, one whom in virtue of the universal brotherhood and the universal redemption, we are bound to stand by and befriend in his need. That gospel to which we all bow as the law of our lives is the message of one who regarded the whole race of man as given into His own hand for safe-keeping; the legacy of one who sacrificed Himself that He might be true to that great self-imposed trust; the story of one who on the best authority 'went about doing good,' who so answered the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' in deed still more persuasively than in words, by the eloquence of a perfectly unselfish life and a perfectly unselfish death.

CANON DUCKWORTH.

Social Amelioration.

Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise. S. LUKE x. 36-37.

I. **N**EARLY nineteen centuries have elapsed since the angels sang their carol at the birth of Christ. What have been the issues of that first Christmastide? Let no sorrow, no discouragement make us fail to see that the results have been immense in their beneficence. The French statesman cried in despair, 'Christ has come, but when cometh salvation?' An English poet sings, 'We have preached Christ for centuries, until at last men learn to scoff, so few seem any better off.' Let no such notes of distress blind us to what is still a splendid reality. The abolition of slavery among the Christian nations; the extinction of gladiatorial games, the cruelties of the amphitheatre; war rendered more merciful and more rare; womanhood honoured and elevated; childhood surrounded with an

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aureole of tenderness and embraced in the arms of mercy ; education everywhere extended ; marriage sanctified ; the bond of serfdom broken ; hospitals built ; the eternal and inalienable rights of man everywhere asserted ; pity upon prisoners ; compassion even to the animal world ; the gospel of Christ preached to the poor—these are some few of the triumphs of Christianity. They belong not only to its ideal, but also in a large measure to its achievements.

II. This is one side of the picture—a blessed and a hopeful side. There is another. Do not make the common mistake of saying when you hear it that it is a truth that the gospel has failed. Never and nowhere has the gospel failed ; never and nowhere has Christianity, when it has been a real Christianity, been other than a consummate blessing and the greatest of all blessings to mankind. You might just as well say that duty had failed because, though it is sublime as heaven, yet men have not given obedience to its laws. But although Christianity has not failed, and cannot fail, yet alike in heathen and Christian lands Christians have failed terribly, egregiously, again and again ; have failed to rise to the standard of their own profession, and to realise the efforts and self-denials which their Lord requires. Whole ages and generations, alas ! have failed to carry forward His banner, and multitudes in every age and generation have betrayed His cause ; and, different as are our degrees of guilt, in our measure we are all guilty. Darkly and terribly guilty are all they who live in wilful and constant violation of the law of God ; all, every one of them, who ‘set themselves to do evil, to work all uncleanness with greediness,’ who call evil good and good evil, who are gaining their livelihoods in ways which demoralise or degrade or defraud mankind, and who thus fundamentally deny the Lord that bought them, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were redeemed a common thing. Guilty also are all, and they are many, who, without active and flagrant immorality, are living only to the world and to the flesh ; they are egotistical, indifferent, caring only for their own comfort or interest ; shut up amid their own refinements and indulgences, heedless of the howling winds which are wrestling on the great deep without, and the multitudes who are being helplessly swallowed up in those wild waves. Less guilty, yet still needing to be aroused to nobler aims, are the multitudes who, though not useless, not immoral, yet too blind to the solemn responsibilities which God lays upon us all, raise no finger outside the narrow circle of their own domesticities to make the world happier or better. Least guilty, yet not wholly to be acquitted, are those who do love and pity their suffering fellow-men, but, folding their hands in their mute despair before the perplexities of life’s awful problem, need to be fired by fresh energies and brighter hopes. It is to the latter classes

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that I would mainly speak, yet not I, but the voice of God in the events of this our day; and the message of the voice to all of us alike is, 'Do not be apathetic; do not be selfish; do not despair.' 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto men? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.'

One of the many ways in which the world and the merely nominal Church tries to check every effort for good, to discourage every reform, and to choke in anguish the voice of every prophet is when the tale of misery or sin is brought under their notice, to say, 'That is sensational; that is exaggerated.' It is a very contemptible form of obstruction. I suppose that the most callous, and the most selfishly optimistic person here will hardly take upon him to deny that in England there is a vast area of want and vice, of crime and misery, the existence of which it is shameful to ignore, since the facts of it are daily before our eyes, and the proofs of it are daily thrust under our notice. Within a bow-shot even of this place are streets where drink and harlotry are rampant, where men, women, and children live in chronic misery, where every now and then some terrible crime is perpetrated, and if the ordinary comfortable citizen does not know all about the poor that we, the clergy, know, yet the daily journals and the commonest records of justice will tell them of the ravages, of betting and gambling, of drunkenness and impurity, of beggary and ruin, of starvation and despair, of the slum and rookery, of rotting tenements where, amid wife-beating, wife desertion, child-murder, and outrage, generation after generation passes away in filth and vice, steeped in dullness, sodden in brutality by drink; of the training house of the thief, and the den of the sweater; the cell of the felon, and the grave of the suicide. According to various careful estimates, those who may be called the submerged classes, or the army of the destitute, are some three millions, one in ten of our people; a population equal to that of Scotland. However much we may try to escape from the burden of our common Christian duty by talking about exaggeration, the fact remains that at our very doors there is an awful waste of splendid human material, an awful shipwreck of redeemed humanity, of which the responsibility falls upon the Church, that is, on every one of us, and upon the nation, that is, on every one of us.

III. Such is the state of the present, and if we do not grapple with its evils, must not the future be far more terrible? Consider these common facts, which have again and again been thrust recently upon our notice. First, the country is being more and more depleted, the great cities are becoming more and more densely over-crowded, and in great cities there is always a tendency to the deterioration of manhood—morally, physically, and spiritually. Secondly, our population

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is increasing at the rate of nearly a thousand a day, and the most rapid increase is among the most destitute and unfit. Thirdly, in spite of all that temperance reformers have said and done, drink still continues to be the chief curse of our country, the awful waste of its resources, the utter ruin of tens of thousands of its sons, even last year was disgraced by an ugly rush to rum. Fourthly, the struggle between capital and labour, the moneyed classes and the destitute, the employer and the employed, the union man and the non-unionist, is constantly assuming proportions more menacing and more colossal; so that in this last year it has daily filled the hearts of all thinking men with anxiety lest it shook to its very foundations the structure of our national prosperity. Now to face these perils, to grapple with these difficulties, will need all our courage, all our wisdom, all our manhood, all our faith. But if we leave them, nearly one out of every ten of our population either helplessly sunk in pauperism or sodden with drink, or, at the least, steeped in grinding poverty, what will happen to us? We are truly warned that then the vicious habits and destitute circumstances of multitudes make it certain that without some kind of extraordinary help they must hunger and sin, and sin and hunger, until, having multiplied their kind and filled up the measure of their miseries, the gaunt fingers of death will close upon them and will terminate their wretchedness. Even while we are talking men are perishing on every side.

And this being so, what is the attitude of the nation toward this state of things? The attitude of some—let us hope they may be very few—is simply not to care about it at all, to live in pleasure on the earth and to be wanton, to have their hearts fat ‘as brawn,’ as cold as ice, as hard as the nether millstone, to heap up superfluous and often ill-gotten riches, to be hoarded in acquisition, squandered in luxury, or reserved for the building up of idle families. And to such men, if such there be, who squander their vast possessions on their own lusts and their own aggrandisement, to them comes the stern message of S. James: ‘Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, ye have taken your pleasures, ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.’

The case lies wholly beyond the reach of isolated and often pernicious almsgiving. It needs the brave heart of a whole nation, it needs the courageous self-denial of a whole Church, it needs the heart’s co-operation of all true Christian men.

DEAN FARRAR.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY

The Homes of the Poor.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. S. LUKE x. 32.

IT was the characteristic criticism of an eccentric divine, that there were a good many occasions in his own life when he found himself in something very like sympathy with this Levite. He took, I presume, that kindlier view of the Levite's character (from which there is nothing in Christ's parable that shuts us out), which sees in him a well-intentioned but inefficient person; and his notion, doubtless, was, that when the Levite, on his way to Jericho, finds his wretched fellow-countryman robbed, wounded, and half dead, by the roadside, he crosses over to observe him more closely, with a genuine impulse of sympathy and compassion. Nay, more: that when he finds the dismal extremity of the situation, he turns away, not because he has no pity, but because the circumstances that excited it appear to him so utterly hopeless. The traveller is all but dead. To move him may hasten his end. The ghastly wounds out of which his life is slowly ebbing would be closed, if closed at all, too late. The man might die on his hands, and then how could he prove that he had not killed him in a quarrel, or robbed and murdered him himself? It was very dreadful; but, what could one do? It was a case beyond cure, and one could only acknowledge its hopelessness and leave the victim to his fate.

There are a great many situations in life in which one seems almost shut up to the same conclusion. There are evils and miseries that we are all conscious of, that are like the habit of drunkenness. Alcoholism ultimately determines, often, the whole moral character. There is no meanness that its victim will not resort to, there is no falsehood that he will not utter, in order to gratify his inordinate craving for drink. And in such a case we are tempted to say, 'It is no use. There is no sense of shame to appeal to. There is no sentiment of honour to confide in. The man is a moral wreck. How dreadful it is!—and, how hopeless! We will go and look at him; but nothing remains to us after that but to leave him to his fate and pass on.'

It is of such an evil that I have been asked to speak to you to-day—an evil at which many of us, like the Levite, have looked, and then have turned away from, not because we did not deplore it, not because we would not gladly have put our hands to some endeavour for its remedy, but because the situation has seemed to us so hopeless, and the chances of effectual relief so dismally remote.

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There are living in New York to-day more than one million people—the precise figures, as closely as can be ascertained, are one million ninety-seven thousand five hundred and sixty-three. Of these there are one hundred and twenty-five thousand children under five years of age. The total number of deaths last year was twenty-seven thousand eight, or twenty-four per thousand, this death-rate being twenty-five per cent. higher than in Philadelphia. Of the whole number of deaths forty-six per cent. (or nearly half) were those of children under five years of age, and of this number of deaths seventy per cent. (or nearly three-fourths) occurred in, or in connection with, tenement houses. Finally, the number of people living in tenement houses is estimated at five hundred thousand, or at least half of our whole population.

I. In order to appreciate the situation of our tenement house population, you must add to the inevitable evils that come from over-crowded, ill-ventilated, viciously-arranged apartments, those others that come from intemperance and crime and neglect. Over against this wretched life, so scanty and so uninviting in its home-aspects, stands the gin palace and the corner grocery, in which heartlessness and greed conspire to demoralise the parents and rob the children. An incident like this is a sample of the infernal spirit which still has its way with but scant restraint. A labouring man out of work took to drink. He had no money, but the rum-seller, in spite of the remonstrances of the man's wife, sold him what he wanted on credit. Meantime the rum-seller's wife employed the labourer's wife to do plain sewing for her, and when the week's work was done, instigated by her husband, she withheld the money due, claiming it as a debt owed to the rum-seller for liquor furnished to the man whose heroic wife was thus striving to support herself and her children. Fortunately, the law was equal to the emergency in this instance; but in hundreds of others just as monstrous it is not. And as a consequence, side by side with all the evils inseparable from over-crowded tenements there reign unchecked those other evils which are the fruit of wide-spread intemperance and its consequent vice and crime.

II. But at this point it may be asked, 'Why do I speak of these things? Doubtless the condition of those who live in tenement houses is wretched enough, and the future of a city which endures them is gloomy enough, but after all, such questions are philanthropic rather than religious, a matter for the humanitarian rather than for the Christian. It may be well for us to walk across to the east side of the town and, like the Levite, look at our unhappy brother, fallen by the wayside, and worse than wounded and half dead; but the case is almost a hopeless one, and if it be not, it

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is not for us to consider it here. The Church exists in the interests of religion. Religion exists to show us how, in this world, to get ready for another. It exists to awaken sinners and to edify believers, and to comfort the sorrowful, and to speak words of hope and consolation to the mourner. It is a mistake when ministers turn aside from their proper work to give attention to these humanitarian schemes. Let them preach the gospel, and visit their people, and administer the Sacraments, and leave these outside interests to those who, having no gospel to preach, must needs supply its place with some philanthropic or humanitarian substitute. The Church was not organised to build model tenements, nor to diffuse sounder schemes of drainage or ventilation. Whenever it comes down from its high level, and turns aside from its more sacred functions, it forgets its dignity, and jeopardises its influence.

Somebody has said, in answer to such sentiments, that when men or institutions reach that point when they are chiefly concerned about conserving their dignity and their influence, they are very close to that period when they will cease to have either to conserve. Whether that be true or no, I am very sure that the Church was not organised to be chiefly concerned about watching her reputation or nursing her influence. As little, undoubtedly, was she organised to build model tenements and to organise stock-companies for the inauguration of a better system of drainage. Her kingdom is not of this world, and whenever she has undertaken to immerse herself deeply in secular affairs she has been more in danger of the secular spirit than even men of the world themselves. For one, I should not consider it a blessing, but an evil, if a capitalist should offer a million of dollars on condition that it expended that sum in rearing model dwellings for the poor and working classes, and assumed the business of their management. Managing real estate is not the calling of the Church, and few institutions are so poorly adapted for such a task as would be a parish or congregation.

But managing real estate is the business of the individual citizen, and as to the moral bearings of that or any other earthly business, the Church, as the witness and messenger of an eternal moral Governor, nay, as the messenger, most of all of a God once Incarnate in our common humanity, must needs, if it has any business at all in the world, have a good deal to say. I wonder if those who would so sharply confine the Church and the ministry to certain official and ceremonial functions have ever read the New Testament. We may take the ministry of Christ, I suppose, as at once a prophecy and pattern of what the work and ministry of the Church should be to-day. But Christ did not merely preach the Sermon on the Mount and die on the Cross. There was no disease so loathsome that He

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did not put forth His hand and touch it. There was no home that He went into, whether it was the home of that Pharisee whose dirty inhospitality He gently rebuked for giving Him no water wherewith to wash His feet, or the home of Simon's wife's mother, which He did not leave until He had expelled the fever which poisoned it and her ; there was no home, I say, which Christ entered, so far as we have any account of His ministry, which He did not leave, both physically and morally, sweeter and decenter and purer because He had entered it. And what He did, to the lame and the blind and the halt and the leper and the impure and the morally vile, I suppose that you and I who profess to be, in one sense or another, His baptized disciples, may wisely be concerned about doing also !

Whatever methods we may employ to lift up our brother, fallen and perishing by the way, may God give us patience and courage and hope ! May He help us to remember whose we are, and whose they are, who are huddled in yonder abodes of squalor and misery. I might point out to you the ties that bind you and them together in a common peril, of which, ordinarily, we do not dream. The men-servants and maid-servants in our houses are often the brothers and sisters of the men and women and children in some crowded tenement. When you wonder how the fatal fever found its way into your pure and well-ordered home, you do not remember that the maid who held your child in her arms may have been, the evening before, while clad in the same garments, holding the fever-tossed child of her brother or sister in the same arms ; and so may have brought the deadly contagion from yonder crowded room, mis-called a home, straight to yours. If you did remember it, perhaps you would be eager to remedy an evil which threatened so terribly not only others, but yourself. But such a motive would be but a poor and ignoble one, at the best. There is another and a diviner motive. The mother of that child, my sister, is your sister. His father, my brother, is your brother. The life of his little one is not less dear to him than yours to you. God has given to you something of the ability to save that life, to redeem and uplift these children of the common Father, and to make the world somehow brighter and purer and better for each one of them. I dare not undertake to say in just which way you best may exercise that ability. But ask God to show you the way, and when He has, make haste to follow it !

H. C. POTTER.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Revelation of the Unseen.

And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2 KINGS vi. 15-17.



TWO several records of the history of Elisha are familiar to the Sunday worshippers in our churches; the one telling of his miracle of healing performed upon Naaman the leper: the other representing him to us in a different and yet more majestic phase of the prophetic character, as intrusted with God's commission to designate and anoint a king over Israel: and the intervening chapters between these two (the 5th and the 9th of 2nd Kings) are filled with the account of his marvellous deeds, and of the various traits of that gentle and loving character, which made him not more the counsellor of princes than the sympathising friend and prompt benefactor of the humblest of his people in all the little accidents and grave calamities of this chequered human life below. From among these holy narratives I have chosen this one, desiring that it may carry comfort and strength, by God's grace, to some heart among my readers, even as it certainly contains in itself the secret of all comfort and of all strength for those who are passing, 'hardly bestead and hungry,' through the wilderness of this world towards the rest and the inheritance which remain in heaven for His people.

I. The first remark which it suggests is as to the heavy pressure of outward and visible things upon us who are still in the body.

This young man could see nothing else. He just saw the Syrian host with its horses and chariots, compassing the city to capture his master; and nothing more, nothing besides. Is it not a true parable for us?

We talk of living by faith, not by sight. It is one of the commonplaces of Christian language. But what truth has it for us? How much of any man's time or thought or interest remains, over and above the demand upon them by things altogether of this world?

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1. There is the business of life. That is a real thing. A large part of the time and of the attention of most men is engrossed by it. From an early morning to a late evening they are busy about that handicraft or that trade or that possession which procures for them the necessities and comforts and enjoyments of the life that now is; these things are all of the present. They have to do with furnishing men with food or clothing, with ornament or luxury, with relief from pain, with appliances for sickness, with counsel in matters of property, or redress in cases of wrong. They have no direct view to anything beyond earth.

2. There are the pleasures of life. Its eating and drinking, its relaxation and resting, its intercourse with neighbours and friends, its cheerful fireside, its human affection and domestic love. These, again, are real things. If they cannot all be seen, they are all of time: they belong to this life; they have no obvious connection with anything beyond the grave; with anything spiritual, heavenly, or eternal.

3. There are the trials of life. These too are real. Nothing so real as the touch of pain: nothing so instantly fatal to frivolity or vanity; nothing so firm in its gripe or so imperious in its command. One ache, one pain, one throbbing pulse, one sensitive nerve, is enough to constrain the attention, and make a man live (for the time) in that alone. And if this is true of the body, not less true is it of the mind. An intense eagerness for some object of ambition, an intense desire for some one's love, one great present anxiety about a beloved friend's welfare, one keen personal fear of danger or shame or loss, is enough to fill the whole being; to occupy every thought, and exclude the possibility of looking off from it for a moment. A man so engrossed will live, as we say, a lifetime in one day. The present hems him in and blocks him up, so that he may be as a blind man to all the realities—if realities there be—which are not of earth and sense and time.

II. And yet the history before us is designed to show how very near, all the while, lies another world and another life, altogether of spirit and heaven and God. It needed just the opening of the eyes, and nothing more, to show this young man a whole concourse of existences and agencies unseen and unsuspected till that moment. He saw the horses and chariots of the human enemy surrounding on every side the dwelling of his master: but he saw not, till prayer opened his eyes, the heavenly chariots and horses of fire which were that master's safeguard in the hour of loneliness and extreme peril.

Now, if the Word of God be true, we also are the inmates of two worlds; a world of matter, and a world of spirit; a world seen, and a world unseen; a world of time, and a world of eternity.

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There is much to make us forget this. We have spoken of the pressing and engrossing influence of things seen and temporal. As a matter of fact, we have feared that many of us are like Elisha's servant before his eyes were opened; conscious only of the visible hosts, and blind utterly to the presence of the invisible. Yet may we not say with truth that God leaves not Himself without witness to any of us as to the existence, the truth, and the importance of spiritual realities?

III. Elisha's servant suddenly perceived himself the centre of a whole system of divine agencies, of which, a moment before, he had not a thought nor an intimation.

In his case those agencies belonged to what we commonly call Providence. That is, they were concerned about the safety of one of God's servants; they protected Elisha from danger; they made him secure amidst a thousand enemies; they made him calm for suffering and brave for action, as knowing himself 'immortal till his work was done.' Was it only of Elisha that these things were written? was it only for Elisha that these things were done? Surely we have here the very same revelation of the care of God for His people, which is expressed also, in general, in the Thirty-fourth Psalm, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.' Oh, if our eyes were opened, like those of this young man, what a scene would be discovered in this one aspect! We go about our daily work, ply head and hand, journey hither and thither, re-enter securely at evening the home from which we started securely in the morning, and in all this, take for granted the continuance of life and health, of sight and hearing, of reason and memory, without one thought of the thousand risks amidst which we live and move and have our being. If we could see the spiritual world as we see the natural, we should find that every life is lived in God's hand, every faculty kept for us by God's keeping, every step taken, every word spoken, and every work done, in virtue of a power not our own, which both enables and guards, communicates the needful gift, and also watches over it with an unsleeping eye. This is the revelation of God's Providence. This is that world, not of sense but of spirit, which the eye divinely opened discerns, and the heart divinely touched rests in and gives thanks for.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

AFTER TRINITY

Gehazi's Lie.

But he went in, and stood before his master, and Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. 2 KINGS v. 25.

GEHAZI'S punishment is startling, but its justice will be more apparent if we proceed to consider what it was in Gehazi's conduct which led up to his lie, and which, from his point of view, made it at the moment necessary for him to tell the lie.

I. Gehazi's conduct, then, involved, first of all, a violation of the trust which his master had reposed in him. Confidence is to society what cement is to a building—it holds all together. From the necessity of the case, we all of us place confidence in some persons, whether our elders or our children; whether our superiors or our servants; whether those from whom we learn or those whom we trust not to abuse the information with which we furnish them. And from the necessity of the case, no less, we all of us, until we have by some great crime forfeited our relations to society altogether, are the objects or recipients of confidence on the part of others, often of a great deal more confidence than we at all suspect, or than we deserve to have reposed in us. Confidence—it is the venture which every human being has to make in dealing with other human beings around him. Confidence—it is the honour, the high and ennobling honour, which in some degree every human being receives at the hand of his fellows, and which associates him, so far, with that highest power and goodness to which, in the last resort, we all of us commit our destinies and our lives. All our occupations in life, all our relations with one another, depend for their wellbeing upon the maintenance of confidence; and to justify confidence on the one hand, and to learn to place confidence largely in other men on the other, are essential conditions of any department of a man's daily public work. The conditions upon which trade is conducted are so largely, as we speak, artificial, that a shock to confidence is felt to be nothing less than a disorder of grave importance, and a violation of confidence a crime which can be with difficulty, if at all, atoned for by the offender. And this, mark you, is by no means a matter of arbitrary or merely human arrangement, it belongs to the very structure of society. It is the way in which one part of the law of God makes itself felt to be essential, even here and now, to the wellbeing of man. Confidence, I say, as vital to the wellbeing of society, is just as much God's appointment and work as the due action of the heart. As vital to the wellbeing of the human body is God's appointment and work. And society is guided by a true instinct when resenting and

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punishing a violation of confidence even with a severity which may, at first sight, appear to be violent or excessive.

Gehazi, then, was an offender against the obligations of confidence ; for he was not merely Elisha's servant ; he was also, to a great extent, a trusted companion ; I might dare to say, in a sense, his partner. Consider the part assigned to Gehazi in Elisha's dealing with the good Shunamite. On two occasions Elisha sends Gehazi with delicate messages to this distinguished lady. It is Gehazi who makes the suggestion that she is childless, and so leads the prophet to promise her a son. It is Gehazi who is sent on before the prophet and the sorrowing mother to lay Elisha's staff upon the face of the dead child. It is Gehazi who, in after years, when the Shunamite was claiming her property at the hands of the king of Israel, describes in glowing terms the deeds of the master from whose presence he was now banished for the remainder of his days. Yes, when it was all too late, Gehazi could feel what had been the honour of this association with the great teacher, with the lofty and saintly character, with the man who, in his simple and austere life, had such power with God that pagans, as well as Israelite kings and statesmen, as well as many of the people, trembled and bowed before him. It was association with such a man—it was this alone—which gave Gehazi what we call 'a position.' To be Elisha's servant was of itself a privileged post of commanding influence. We have already seen how the Syrian general acknowledged it. To be associated with Elisha in his work, to share his sympathies, and to a certain extent his counsels, to know what never could have been known but for this high companionship, would have been felt by a man with even the natural sense of honour to impose great and lasting obligations. And, accordingly, when Gehazi had once so far yielded to his covetous desires as to go after Naaman and negotiate for the treasure, his conscience told him—told him at once—that he had done that which his sense of honour itself condemned. To use the great position which his relation to Elisha had secured to him for a purpose which he knew Elisha would have disallowed—to employ the knowledge, the experience, the influence with other men, which such an intimacy conferred, in order to compass an end which he dared not acknowledge to the master whose generous confidence had made him what he was—this was to do an act which the pagans of Damascus, in their better moments, would have shrunk from doing.

And Gehazi could hardly stop here. We have heard, perhaps, of some clerk in a public office, or in a great mercantile house, who has sold information to which his position gave him access, with the result of enriching himself, but to the embarrassment, or to the serious loss, of his employers. No man having committed an act

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like that can say that he can go no further. He may well have no choice. The man who has acted against his sense of right is on the brink of lying against his sense of truth. Gehazi had to choose between a lie and humiliation; and when he had brought himself to prefer two talents of silver and two changes of raiment to the love and the trust of his great friend and patron, there is not much doubt what his choice would be.

II. And why was Gehazi's act so wrong in the eyes of Elisha? Because it involved a serious injury to the cause of true religion. What is said of our Lord and Saviour by the aged Simeon in the *Nunc Dimittis* was in a measure true of the religion of the prophets of Israel also. That religion had a double aspect. It was 'prepared before the face of all people to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of God's people.' When S. Paul wishes to mark the degradation of the Jews of his time he quotes a warning which, in slightly different terms, had been given by Nathan to David, by Isaiah and Ezekiel, respectively, to the men of their day, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' Israel had duties to the heathen; not, indeed, the great duty which is laid upon the Church of Jesus Christ, of bringing them all, as quickly and as surely as may be, into the true fold, but the duty of letting them at least see that there was a lamp of truth burning in the hearts of the one chosen people, by the light of which, if they would, they might read God's best lessons about themselves and about Him in nature and history. In Elisha's eyes the main interest of Naaman's visit was not that it was calculated to establish friendly political relations between Israel and Syria so long estranged, nor yet that it had resulted in a bodily cure which, from the eminence of the patient, could not but be famous throughout the neighbouring countries of the East, but that it had, and was likely to have, important results on the progress of true religion. Naaman, as we have seen, was, in effect, converted to faith in the one true God, and, therefore, everything that was likely to strengthen or weaken him in the religion of his choice was, in Elisha's eyes, of great importance—an importance altogether distinct in kind from that of any political or social event whatever; and here it was that conduct like Gehazi's was likely to act so very disastrously. Elisha had been careful to refuse all and any of the splendid presents which Naaman offered. If Naaman was to carry back with him a sound body, and, what was better, a soul illuminated by divine truth, Elisha was determined that these great blessings should not be associated in his mind with the petty details of a commercial transaction. God's great gifts in grace should surely resemble His gifts in nature in being bestowed with an open-handed generosity. The heathen were to come, in the

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language of prophecy, to the waters of salvation and to the waters of healing, without money and without price. But Gehazi's act, as it must have presented itself to Naaman, had all the appearance of an after-thought on the prophet's part, which would be fatal to his first and high idea of the prophet's disinterestedness. It may well have seemed to Naaman as if Elisha had repented at the last moment of his first large-heartedness, as if he had originally declined the presents from an impulsive enthusiasm which, after reasoning, would not last; as if the prophet of the true God was, after all, just like the rest of mankind in looking upon the high gifts of Heaven as having a marketable value, just like any of the wares that were exposed for sale in the bazaars of Damascus. Elisha foresaw this result as too likely to follow upon his servant's act; he foresaw the cynical recoil; perhaps the ruin or the apostasy of the recent, probably still hesitating, convert; and hence his searching, agonising question to Gehazi, 'Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?'

We may be sure that Gehazi's conscience was sufficiently enlightened by association with Elisha to have anticipated and indorsed Elisha's feeling on the subject; and this would have been with him a second and more powerful reason for concealment, so long as he thought it possible, at any cost, for Gehazi would hardly have tried to persuade himself that, after all, he was not a prophet, and that a high view of duty, which would have been becoming in his master, was not necessary in him. It is, I take it, the modern conscience which indulges in these refinements upon the broad responsibilities of a position in life. Those who are associated with God's work in some capacity, less than the most responsible, are yet, in their degree, answerable for the success of that work—are bound, at the least, to do nothing that can hinder or can injure it. Not ordained clergymen only, but those who are connected with them by family ties, as wives or daughters, and those who, without being ordained, take part in the service of the Church whether in choirs or schools, or works of charity, are answerable, every one of them, for the effect of their conduct and bearing on men who are without any religion, but who, perhaps, are seeking one. Inconsistencies or works on the part of those who are associated with the work of Christ in the world, if not actually consecrated to promoting it—inconsistencies of which little is thought by those who are guilty of them—may, oh! believe it—be only too easily taken by others to be the measure of the practical worth of the Christian creed, and may have the effect of driving an inquirer back into the desert, when he is already almost within sight of the towers of Jerusalem. It is not the clergy alone—they

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have, indeed, to remember it, but it is not the clergy alone—who have to remember that there are things better worth living and working for than the two talents of silver and two changes of raiment which may possibly be filched from the world.

It was, then, Gehazi's sense of the character of his act in following after Naaman which led him into his great and deliberate sin against the law of truth. He had, indeed, found it necessary to deceive as soon as he began to do wrong. There is a nexus between one sin and another, just as there is a connection between one virtue and another. A man cannot stop his boat at will in the strong currents that run just above Niagara, though he might have avoided those currents at one time altogether. Gehazi's fiction about the needs of the two imaginary students from the schools of the prophets, his dismissal of Naaman's servants while under the cover of the hill which hid the proceeding from Elisha's eye, these were the preliminary stages of a falsehood by which Gehazi's connection was fatally and surely hardened up to the decisive point of declaring before his master that he had not been in pursuit of Naaman at all.

III. And here, as almost always, we remark the blindness of sin, blindness in the midst of so much ingenuity, so much contrivance. No one can know better than Gehazi that Elisha knew a great deal that was going on beyond the range of his eyesight. Why? As we heard, the slaves of the king of Syria said to their master that Elisha repeated to the king of Israel the words that the Syrian king uttered in his bed-chamber. Gehazi had had large opportunities of taking the measure of Elisha's power, and yet he set to work as if Elisha could know nothing that he did not witness with his bodily eyes. And this was the point of the other reproachful question, 'Went not my heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?' It was folly, but it was folly of which almost every criminal trial in our courts affords a fresh example. Sin blinds men to the real circumstances with which they have to deal. Above all, it destroys their power of apprehending the presence and the omniscience of God. What Gehazi thought of Elisha, all sinners, with infinitely less reason, think about Almighty God. 'Tush, the Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' The wasted ingenuity of a diseased or a violated conscience, culminating first in outrageous falsehood, and then in conspicuous disgrace, are, as the moral world goes, quite in order.

Gehazi's punishment seemed severe, but it marks a fact which we do well to remember, the fact that the injury which a deliberate falsehood inflicts on the moral nature is, in this life, irreparable. I do not say that a lie cannot be forgiven. God forbid! That would be to limit His mercy in Jesus Christ; nor do I say that a habit of substantial

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truthfulness may not be restored. God forbid! That would be to limit the efficacy of His grace in Jesus Christ. But when the lie has been pardoned and the habit of truth re-established, the effect of the lie still remains. The shock which it has inflicted on the more delicate fibres of the moral nature issues in a permanent weakness, which shows itself when any demand or strain is put upon high principle. A man who has once told a very deliberate lie, mark, I do not speak of any form or degree of involuntary falsehood, the man who, looking truth right in the face, has deliberately contradicted it knowing it to be truth, is like a man who has lost a lung. He may get on pretty well so long as over-exposure and over-exertion do not tax his resources. He is of the nature of a moral invalid, and there is no saying when or how his constitution may not give way. And Gehazi's leprosy expressed this. It was a visible symbol of the moral and inward fact, the fact that Gehazi's moral nature was permanently damaged. Gehazi could not be again as he was. He must carry with him to his grave the brand of humiliation and of weakness. He could not, either as a liar or as a leper, live with Elisha. The matter was forbidden by the terms of the Jewish law. The former was inconsistent with the rule of every good Israelite's household. 'There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house. He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.' And so Gehazi went forth, to mourn for a lifetime the folly and the wickedness which had led him to throw away the companionship and the confidence of so good and great a friend.

And Gehazi's fall teaches us three practical lessons. One is to keep our desires in order if we mean to keep out of grave sin. As S. James says, 'Lust,' or desire, 'when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' That is the order of growth in evil, and the practical rule is, therefore, *obsta principiis*, put a stop to the process, if you can, in the very beginning. If Gehazi had not cast those longing eyes upon the Syrian wealth, he would never have entered upon the series of acts which culminated in his great lie, and in his life-long leprosy. If Christ our Lord is to reign over our hearts and tongues, He must be enthroned, first of all, by His Spirit, in those hearts out of which, in His absence, evil desires are ever flowing.

And a second lesson is the danger of thinking that great religious advantages of themselves protect a man against grievous sins. The illusion is common. Experience in all ages quite contradicts it. What religious advantages in that day could be greater than those of Gehazi? Naaman, while still a pagan, could have told Gehazi that a lie is moral degradation; and the high aspirations for a new religious life in the court and the people of Israel, which Gehazi

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would have often heard from his master's lips, should have led him to think that he too lived in a moral atmosphere in which attention to the simplest and primary rules of good living might be taken for granted. A lofty ideal, like the Sermon on the Mount, or like the discourse in the upper room, does not oblige those who have it before their eyes to be true even to those virtues which the heathen honoured; the grace of the Holy Spirit, and of the Christian Sacraments, does not put force upon reluctant wills, or compel us to practise even natural goodness if we are not so minded. What can be more distressing than the spectacle of men whose education and friendships and work at times, it may be, pointed to all the higher standards of the gospel, and who yet, in the presence of temptation, have fallen below what is required of men of the world? 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'

And the last lesson is the priceless value of truthfulness in the soul's life. No advantage whatever of mind, or body, or estate, can counterbalance the misery of indifference to truth. No faults, however grave, are irreparable when the soul still clings to a love of truth. Truth is the basis of all other natural virtues in the human soul. It is the basis of all true religion, courage, justice, temperance. What are these but products of the sense of truth, dictating the forms of virtuous effort which are required by different circumstances? It is the sense of truth, as well as the voice of the Apostle, which tells us that 'if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' It is the sense of truth which bids us pray for God's pardoning mercy in Jesus Christ, because we know what we are as sinners. It is the sense of truth which leads us to seek God's grace from His Holy Spirit and in His Sacraments, for we know our weakness when we are left to ourselves. Truth, it is the one condition of all moral and religious progress. It were, indeed, better, in the phrase of the old Greeks, even to perish in the light than to miss truth altogether; but as matters stand, we Christians know that 'if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,' and that, for the rest, 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

H. P. LIDDON.

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The Word and the Preacher.

In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace.' 2 KINGS v. 18, 19.

I HAVE no intention of going into the details of Elisha's history. But there are one or two particulars in it, on which, as they present some degree of difficulty and have been laid hold of by those who seek occasion against Holy Scripture, it may not be unreasonable to bestow a deliberate and sober consideration.

I. The first of them is the treatment of the children who mocked Elisha in the outskirts of Bethel. Elisha's conduct in this instance is not what we should have looked for: nor is it in keeping with the general benevolence of his character. They who have no reverence for God's saints, and who judge them by what comes under their own cognisance and that alone, would have no scruple in ascribing it to irritation; or in speaking of the punishment which the prophet's imprecation drew down upon the offenders as strangely disproportioned to the offence. But what is the view which Christian piety would dictate?

First of all, it is to be observed that God heard and ratified the imprecation. The punishment which followed was of God's infliction. God, therefore, if we may reverently say so, made Himself responsible for the charge of severity. They who blame, blame God, not man.

Still, no doubt, the case is a perplexing one; but it is one of many in which, if we cannot give an account wholly satisfactory, we are called upon to suspend our judgments, not doubting that if we knew all the circumstances our perplexity would be removed. And this is really the feeling with which a reverential mind will regard Scripture difficulties generally. Its thoughts will be that which a loving child has in reference to the conduct of a good and wise parent in whom he reposes entire confidence. There may be, the Christian will say—there may be, as confessedly there are, perplexing things, in some of God's dealings recorded in Scripture; so there are also in his providential dealings, such as we see them in the world around us. But they do not trouble me. Where I can discern a reason for them—or as far as I can—well and good—I rejoice to see His hand. Where I cannot, I rest with entire confidence on the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of my heavenly Father. What He does I know not now, but perhaps I shall know hereafter, and the reason why He does it. For the present I am content to walk by faith; to believe, where I do not see.

Such reflections, it is true, will afford little satisfaction to the

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scoffer, though a glance at the world in which he lives might convince him there is reason in them; but they will not seldom free the Christian from perplexing thoughts.

To return, however, to the incident before us. If we cannot discern the whole of the account which is to be given, we may at least discern some reasons which may serve to explain the severity of the punishment.

If there was one spot in the whole kingdom of Israel which more than any other had made itself obnoxious to God's judgments, Bethel was that spot. It was connected by hallowed associations with the earliest history of the Hebrew people. Twice had God appeared there to their ancestor, each time giving him the assurance of his favour, and revealing the blessings which he had in store for his descendants; and the name 'Bethel'—the House of God—remained a memorial of these gracious communications. But 'Bethel' had now become 'Bethaven'—the House of Vanity—the house of naught. There Jeroboam had set up his calves—making it the great centre of that idol-worship by which the Israelites were drawn aside from the service of the God of their fathers. Bethel was in fact to the kingdom of the ten tribes for evil, what Jerusalem and the Temple were designed to be for the whole race of Israel, for good. It was the heart from which the life-blood of idolatry circulated through the land. Need we wonder then that in a dispensation, which was characterised by a system of temporal rewards and punishments, some signal display of God's justice should be manifested towards such a place on the occurrence of a special occasion to call it forth? Such an occasion there was in the present instance. The scoffing cry of the children too accurately reflected the infidel and apostate spirit of their parents, and the terrible fate which befel the one was a meet chastisement of the other: a chastisement which would be felt the more keenly by those whose consciences were not seared beyond all feeling from the circumstance of the youthful age of those who were its immediate subjects. If these things were done in the green tree, it would be obvious to ask, what would be done in the dry?

There can be no doubt that the scoffing words which formed the burthen of the children's cry referred to the ascension of Elijah, and were uttered in ridicule of the account of it which had been circulated, and as such, that they did indicate an infidel spirit, and as such were punished. But they were also a contumelious reproach directed against Elisha, and against Elisha, as God's servant, and He who said, 'Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm,' regarded the insult as an insult offered to Himself, and did not suffer it to go unpunished.

The fate then which befel these youths was to the men of their

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generation a protest against idolatry generally, and in particular it held out an awful warning against a scoffing spirit, especially when the objects of its ridicule are God's servants, and still more God's ministers.

And assuredly the lesson is for us also. It shows us in what light God regards such a spirit and the manifestations of it.

For it does not follow, because this or the other form of evil is suffered ordinarily to go unpunished, that it is not highly displeasing to God, and will not eventually receive that recompense which is due to it. The occasional instances which are recorded in Scripture, or which come within the range of our own experience, of terrible and startling chastisements following close upon the heels of transgressions stand out as warnings against the sins which drew them down. Every lie is not visited with prompt punishment, but the fate of Ananias and Sapphira declares what God's mind is with regard to lying; every instance of covetousness is not at once detected and exposed, but the leprosy of Gehazi has set God's mark of reprobation upon such deeds for ever. Every instance of intemperance—every instance of unbridled lust—is not followed by immediate tokens of God's displeasure—but occasionally when some startling case occurs—as when one has been hurried out of the world from a scene of debauchery, or another has been summoned to his account from a harlot's bed—here again we are shown in what light God views such sins—and so in like manner, though every instance of ridicule directed against religion or the ministers of religion, as such, or God's servants, as such, is not followed by speedy punishment, yet the fate which befel these youths at Bethel, is a warning once for all—for us as well as for the people of their own day and generation, that sooner or later such conduct shall receive the due recompense of reward.

Nor is the warning, as far as this age is concerned, a needless one.

II. The destruction of the children at Bethel is not the only incident in Elisha's history which has proved a stumbling-block. His solution of the case of conscience which Naaman the Syrian proposed to him has seemed to some like a sanction given to insincerity, and that in a matter, where, of all others, a frank and fearless avowal of a man's principles is required. 'In this thing,' Naaman asks—'In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.' Should we not have expected to find the prophet forbidding him to go into the house of Rimmon at all—or at any rate forbidding him to use a gesture which if it did not give, might seem to give religious worship to an idol? Yet Elisha says to him, 'Go in peace.'

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The act was not an idolatrous act. It was not intended by Naaman as such—it was not meant to have the appearance of being such. Had he stood apart, and bowed himself of his own accord, or at his master's command, there would have been at least the simulation of worship, and that of course would have been highly sinful. But the circumstances which it so pointedly and of set purpose specified, of the king leaning upon his hand, alters the whole case. His bowing of himself was no more a voluntary act than was his accompanying of his master into the temple. It was simply mechanical, such an inclination of his body as obeisance of his master rendered necessary. If it be urged that he did wrong in allowing himself to be made passively accessory to an act of idolatry, I can only reply, the prophet does not appear to have thought so, and if the prophet did not, we may well believe that the prophet's Master would not have imputed it to him for sin—that Master—of whom it is written that He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, and who defended His disciples, when some would have required of them a degree of austerity which as yet they were not able to bear, by the apposite illustration that new wine must not be put into old bottles.

And herein Elisha's dealing with Naaman holds out an instructive lesson to those who have to do with new converts, or with persons who are newly awakened to the importance of a religious life. It is natural to such persons to have scruples—often well-founded scruples—but not always well-founded. As they advance in the Christian life, become better acquainted with Scripture, have their spirits more thoroughly assimilated to its spirit, and grow up into a surer confidence in their own sincerity and singleness of purpose, these scruples will decrease, and they will see their way intuitively, but in the meantime it is of no little consequence to them that they should have the advantage of prudent, sober, godly advisers, of persons who see clearly where a principle is involved, and where there is nothing of the sort, and who in the one case will bid them set their faces like a flint; in the other, will deal gently and tenderly by them, taking heed lest they should lay upon them a burthen which in their present stage they are not able to bear.

Such an adviser was S. Paul. Most instructive it is to observe with what clearness and distinctness he apprehended the system which it was his mission to preach; and it is the more remarkable, unless we bear in mind who was His teacher, when it is considered how many Jewish prejudices he had to overcome. When a principle was involved, no consideration in the world would induce him to swerve to the right hand or to the left. He was ready to withstand even the very chiefest of his brother Apostles rather than yield a hair's-breadth

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of the liberty which was the right of the Gentile converts. But where the matter was a matter of indifference, he was prepared to become all things to all men, and to advise others to become so too.

C. HEURTLEY.

Great Things and Small.

My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?
2. KINGS v. 13.

1. 'IF the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?' How many persons are there, sufficiently desirous of salvation to have been tolerant of a very burdensome ritual, had the gospel prescribed it, who yet find in the fewness and simplicity of its authorised observances an excuse for disregarding them altogether. I do not doubt that there are many here present, who, if they had been commanded to perform certain acts of worship seven times in a day, to undergo great privations and make great sacrifices in order to accomplish a very wearisome round of ritual ceremonies, would have found in the mere difficulty of compliance a motive for obedience. There is evidently something in human nature, not only which is roused by difficulties, but which is flattered by demands. Let a man suppose that heaven is to be won by punctuality of observance, and he will count every added ceremony not only a fresh stimulus but a new honour. And yet the same person cannot be brought to regard with proper respect the moderate and quiet services of his own Church, the humble instrumentality of preaching, or the two Sacraments which Christ has ordained. If you wish to gain his attention at all, you must add to these true and just requirements a multitude of others which rest but on opinion or fancy. He cannot be brought to see that a simple ordinance like that of Christian baptism can derive any importance from the fact of Christ's institution, of Christ's command. He cannot understand how there should be any connection at all between the washing of water and the condition of a soul; between the putting away, as S. Peter expresses it, of the filth of the flesh, and the answer of a good conscience toward God. If he brings his child to the font, it is in compliance with the world's custom rather than with the Saviour's word. He cannot see that the very simplicity of the sign is rather an argument for than against its divine origin. If man had had the ordaining of it, certainly it would have been something more difficult, more cumbrous, and more costly. In the same way he refuses to believe that there can be anything beneficial to the soul in eating a morsel

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of Bread or drinking a few drops of Wine at the table of his Lord. He asks again, What can be the connection in such matters between the body and the soul? How can the food of the body be in any sense the strengthening of the soul? He can understand that what he calls a good life, or even a devout and pious spirit, may be an acceptable offering; but he cannot believe—he will almost say so in words—that it can be a matter of the slightest moment whether or no he performs that outward act of communion which nevertheless he cannot deny to be distinctly ordained and plainly commanded in the gospel. If the prophet, if the Saviour, had bidden him to do some great thing, he would certainly have done it: but he cannot bring himself to believe and obey, when the charge is that simple one to wash and be clean.

II. The same tendency is exemplified in reference to the doctrines of the gospel.

They who would have done some great thing will not do that which is less; they who would be willing to toil on under hard conditions, to go heavily all their days in the bitterness of their soul, to walk mournfully and fearfully along the path of life before the Lord of Hosts, if haply they might at length attain, by pains and cares and tears, to the resurrection of the just, will not accept the tidings of an accomplished forgiveness, will not close with the offer of a positively promised Spirit; and thus fulfil, again and again, the description of the text, 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean!'

III. We may add yet another illustration, drawn from the requirements of the gospel.

So long as a person is walking altogether in darkness, the demands of the gospel give him little trouble. He heeds them not. They may be light, or they may be grievous, the commands of God are for him as if they were not. If he keeps any of them, it is by chance; it is because natural disposition runs, in that respect, for him, in the groove of right, in the track of duty. But when, if ever, he begins to feel that he has a soul to be saved; that God has a will concerning him, which it is life to obey and death to contradict; how often is it seen that, that in the pursuit of some great thing, in the search for something arduous and something new, he loses altogether the duty and the blessing which lay at his very door, in his very path, could he but have seen them, and shows, unknown to himself, a spirit of self-will and self-pleasing at the very moment when he seems to be asking most humbly, what is the will of God concerning him.

How have whole systems of religion been founded upon the forget-

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fulness of this principle ! Men have either gone out of the world, or sought to render themselves or others miserable in it, just because they thought it necessary to do some great thing in order to please God ! What is monastic life in all its forms and degrees, the endeavour to escape from the temptations of society and to anticipate heaven by a life here below of uninterrupted devotion, but a neglect of the principle suggested by the text ? And what is asceticism in all its forms and degrees, the refusal to one's-self of life's simple comforts, the prohibition of marriage and the commanding to abstain from meats, the substitution of a system of self-torture for a spirit of temperance and of thankfulness, but a neglect of the same wise and wholesome caution, that what God looks for in us is, not the doing of some great thing, but the endeavour to be pure and holy in the performance of common duties and in the use of lawful enjoyments ? And how true is it, in all these cases, that the easy thing is not always the small thing, that to some natures it is far more attractive to have a high thing, a great thing, a novel thing, proposed to them, than a level, an ordinary, or an old duty, pressed upon them ; inso-much that he who would have exalted himself to the one cannot humble himself to the other, and he who would have buried himself in a cloister, or foregone every luxury and every amusement, without murmuring or complaint, cannot bring himself to be an exemplary man in life's common or natural relations, cannot set himself vigorously to that which brings with it neither applause nor self-congratulation, the fulfilment, as in God's behalf, as in Christ's service, of the little every-day duties of kindness, of self-denial, and of charity, the careful walking in a trivial round, the punctual, loving performance of a common task !

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Reality of Invisible Things.

When the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold, an host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do ? And he answered, Fear not ; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw ; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2 KINGS vi. 15-17.

THE distinguishing mark of a religious man is his attitude toward invisible things : he discerns them, while others do not.

The case in the text ; when Jesus recognised the Holy Ghost others saw only a dove ; when He heard the voice of God others said it thundered, etc.

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These invisible things the subject-matter of Christian faith : God, Providence, Immortality, etc.

The Scripture claims for these the utmost reality. 'The things which are seen are temporal,' etc.

Upon what does this peculiarity, faculty of vision, rest?

I. Upon the analogy of natural things.

The great forces are invisible.

Contrast the seeming force of Niagara with the subtle power of evaporation which lifts to the clouds three times the amount of water which goes over the Falls.

Contrast the force of a storm piling up waves with the attraction of the moon 'drawing the tides at her queenly skirts.'

So also in the moral world :

Men's motives more real than their actions.

The effect of a panic in battle, or in business. (An invisible but terribly real fact.)

II. This Christian claim of spiritual faculty is contrary to the spirit of the age—or of any age.

When our Lord said, 'My word shall not pass away,' etc., He was not believed.

Which of the two would their contemporaries have said to be most likely to survive in influence, S. Paul or the sweet Gallio?

III. How then is our sure faith in invisible things justified?

1. By what it does.

The Law of Gravity made a place for itself in virtue of the problems it solved.

[Fancy some old astrologer in his tower with a new copy of the *Principia* before him,—his anger and apprehension !]

The fact of the clear moral judgments of these people who see the 'invisible things of God'!

IV. This invisibility is both the strength and the weakness of Christianity.

It, by contrast with the hard present, seems unreal.

(The young man could see the enemy at once, but could not discern the succour until by prayer he came into a spiritual mind.)

But it is also its security.

Its enemies can never discover it.

It grows like seed ; as well argue against the movements of the stars, or attack the progress of springtime by artillery !

S. D. M'CONNELL.

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Angelic Guardians.

Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 2 KINGS vi. 15, 16.

THE King of Syria, hearing that Elisha by his prophetic knowledge informed the King of Israel of the orders he gave in his bed-chamber that his army should encamp in such and such a place, so that he, the King of Israel, might order his armies to avoid that place, sent his soldiers to take Elisha. When the servant of Elisha saw the city surrounded by the army of the Syrians he was struck with fear, till Elisha asked God to open his eyes, at which he saw the city surrounded with the hosts of heaven to defend his master.

I. Now there is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews in which we are told that we of the Christian Church, even whilst we are on earth, are come to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels. We are just as much surrounded by these angelic beings as was Elisha and his servant. Nothing then can happen to us except by the permission of God, and we shall not know till we are in another world, how often we have been defended and rescued by them in this.

II. But we have more than this fellowship with, and defence by angels. If we are on the side of God, then we have God with us; nay, we have much more than this, for the angels seem to be external to us, whereas we are told by the Apostle S. John (1 Epis. iv. 4), that 'greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world.' And so another Apostle asks, 'Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?' and another says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.'

M. F. SADLER.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Law a Schoolmaster.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. GALATIANS iii. 24.



HIS is one of those sentences often to be met with in S. Paul, into which he compresses an entire world of thought and feeling—sentences in which the message that he has to announce reaches its tersest and most vigorous expression. S. Paul is explaining to the Galatian Christians, some of whom were inclined to go back to Jewish usages, the true place and office of the old Jewish law in the religious history of man. And by ‘the law’ he means, not simply the Ten Commandments or even the whole body of precepts contained in the books of Moses, but the sacred literature and ordinances as received in their entirety by the Jewish people in his own day. Of the law taken in this broad and comprehensive sense he asserts that it was a schoolmaster to bring Jews by birth, like himself, to faith in and love for our Lord Jesus Christ. The original word translated ‘schoolmaster’ in this passage does not mean the master of a school. It was the name of a slave who had charge of his owner’s children, and who, among other duties, led them by the hand to the porch, or the house, where the teacher who was really to instruct them gave his lessons. This slave was not merely a servant who kept the children neat and out of the way of danger: he was a sort of private tutor as well, who prepared them for the instructions which they were to receive from the philosopher or professor whose class they attended. These higher lessons were quite beyond the power of the tutor himself to give, but he could do something in the way of removing difficulties which prevented young people from understanding what they were taught; and, above all, he could take care that those intrusted to his charge should be punctually in their place when the philosopher or professor began his work.

Now, by this reference to the family arrangements of the ancient world S. Paul is able to place before his readers, very clearly, the real relation of the Jewish law to the gospel and faith of Christ. S. Paul takes up a middle position on the subject, between those who so exaggerated the importance of the Jewish law as to consider it a

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final revelation from God to man, and those, on the other hand, who went so far as to speak of it as, religiously, useless. No, the law was not final, for Jesus Christ had come, and His gospel, although based upon it, had superseded it. No, the law was not useless, for it was a tutor charged with the high and honourable duty of bringing the Jewish people down to the school of Christ. In the Apostle's eyes there had been, now for some four-and-twenty years, one great school open to all the races of mankind, and in which alone instruction was to be had respecting the objects which are best worth every man's attentive study; and that school was the Church of Jesus Christ. In S. Paul's eyes there was one great teacher—only one—who had absolute claims upon the intellectual and moral allegiance of man—one prince of philosophers and poets and prophets, at whose voice all others should hold their peace, since, while they only could guess at truth, or could teach it in fragments, He possessed and proclaimed it in its entirety without error and without imperfection, for in Him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And since His Incarnation He had sat as the light and instructor of the nations, first, visibly, during the years of His earthly ministry, and then, invisibly, as speaking through His Apostles and His Church. He was the true master of souls, through whom the eternal God would teach mankind its highest lessons, and the value of all other teachers simply varied with their disposition or their power to lead mankind to become His pupils. Pagan religion and pagan philosophy did this service occasionally and incidentally for men of pure and noble character, but the law and religion of Israel was, from first to last, a preparation for Him. It was 'a shadow of good things to come.' It was a tutor, whose business and privilege it was to point the way to the dwelling of the great Master.

Now, how did the Jewish religion or law answer to S. Paul's description? What were the means by which it did lead honest hearts and minds away from allegiance to itself, and end by handing them over to the Church, or school of Christ?

There were three main ways, among others, by which this was effected.

I. The religion of Israel brought men to Christ, first of all, by the light—I may say by the constraining force—of prophecy. If any people were ever encouraged by their sacred literature to live in and for the future, that people was Israel. From Genesis to Malachi there is a long chain of predictions—predictions at first vague and indeterminate, and then, as the centuries passed, becoming narrower, clearer, more and more definite, until at last they might seem to close around their object and to describe Him by anticipation,

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but completely. First a human deliverance of some kind, then a personal Saviour, is announced. He is to come of the descendants of Abraham, then of the race of Israel, then of the tribe of Judah, then of the family of David. He is to be a monarch and yet a sufferer. He is to be born supernaturally, and yet He is to die. He is to be buried, and yet he is to conquer the allegiance of the world. This one prediction, indeed, must have struck, as it did strike, thoughtful Jews as something peculiarly astonishing—that from their own little country there would arise a teacher whose life would be marked by humiliation and by apparent failure, while in the end he would bring the proud heathen peoples around to the knowledge of the true God. For many a year such language must have seemed too good, as we say, to be true—too evidently the imagining of pious prophets and teachers to have any destined place in the world of hard facts: and yet there it was in the sacred books of Israel. There it was, confronting one generation after another. There it was, sometimes neglected, sometimes studied intently, then again cast aside—the object of awful wonder, of wild misunderstanding, of audacious speculation. There it was, at once a rebuke and an encouragement—a difficulty and yet a witness and a guarantee—a lamp to the feet and a light to the paths, and yet a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, as fathers and sons and grandsons, one after another, read it and passed away. And, at last, He to whom it pointed came Himself among men, and then these words had done their work, just as light along the line of the horizon disappears when we see the orb of the rising sun. He did die in humiliation and in shame, and then He passed on to be the spiritual conqueror of the world. He was exactly what prophecy had foretold. He Himself appealed to prophecy as warranting His claims. He claimed to be exactly what it had sketched beforehand. ‘Search the Scriptures,’ He said to the Jews of His day, ‘for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.’ And so to His perplexed disciples after the Resurrection: ‘O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ ‘And then beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.’ And thus when S. Peter is arguing with Christians who believe in an ascended Saviour, he says, ‘We have not followed cunningly devised fables.’ He refers, first of all, to what he himself had seen at the Transfiguration, and then he adds, ‘We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.’ And the first

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book of the New Testament—S. Matthew's Gospel—was written mainly with the object of showing in detail to the Christians of Judea that Jesus of Nazareth fully corresponded to the Christ of prophecy. Again and again we meet with the phrase 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,' as though it was not more true that prophecy had been given to lead men to Christ than that Christ had come to justify the truth of prophecy. Read that first gospel through and observe how in it the scattered sayings of the Jewish prophets are brought to a focus and seem to centre in and to be satisfied by one single life. See how prophecy and the law takes Israel by the hand and leads him down to the Redeemer as the certificate of its truth—as the object of its existence.

II. The Jewish religion, secondly, brought men to Christ by that ceremonial law which formed so important a part of it. It invested with ceremony the worship of God—the great occasions of state—the private events of human life. Ceremony is a kind of language; it is a means of conveying ideas from mind to mind. It is the language not of speech but of action. It is less explicit than the words we use: it is often more suggestive. Every day of our lives, as we stand face to face with each other, a thousand gestures render words unnecessary and convey more meaning than words could convey. Every day of our lives, during our intercourse with each other, we read this language of action as we listen to that other language of the tongue. We try and interpret the words that we hear by what we observe of the expressive gestures which accompany them. Ceremony, as an instrument for expressing ideas, strikes its roots far into the original instincts of our common nature; and when God embodied it largely in the religion which He gave to Israel He had much deeper purposes in view than lay on the surface of that which He prescribed. Never let us forget, as we read such books as Leviticus, that the ancient ritual of Israel was not of human origin—that it was enjoined from heaven. Doubtless, it was intended to give shape, expression, fixity, to the solemn faith in and worship of God, which was revealed to Israel. Doubtless, too, it was meant to establish a barrier, visible to sense, between the people of revelation and the heathen races around. But these results might, conceivably, have been secured by other rites than those which are commanded in the Jewish law; and the ritual of Leviticus has a meaning and a value over and above this. It was throughout a sort of acted prophecy. It looked forward—every detail of it—to a coming time—to a higher worship—to a religion of which it was but the shadow thrown forward, provisionally, across the ages, until the complete reality which it heralded should at length appear.

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‘What is the meaning’—pious Jews must have again and again exclaimed—‘what is the meaning of all these carefully elaborated rites—of these solemn days, these costly dresses, these blood-stained sacrifices? Why these and no others? Why these details, many of them, apparently, so trivial, yet enforced by sanctions so imposing and so awful?’ The answer was that all this ceremonial law has an object beyond itself. It is the shadow of good things to come: it is not the very image of the things. It is a teacher who will lead his pupils to the feet of one to whose person and work he thus perpetually refers in the language—the expressive language—of symbol. All that could be gathered from the ceremonial law before Christ’s coming was that it meant a something beyond itself. What it meant could only be known afterwards, and in the light of the gospel. Jews could not have guessed exactly that the Sabbath pointed to the eternal rest of heaven, and circumcision to the purification of man’s nature by a new birth, and the paschal lamb to the Divine Victim offered for human sin on Mount Calvary, and the table of shewbread to the Blessed Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. We Christians see all this. We see much more, plainly enough, but we could hardly have divined it if we had lived in the ages before the Incarnation. But when Christ came, this key to the meaning of the Jewish ceremonial was seen to fit. It pointed to Him and to His redemptive work from first to last. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show this—to show that the ceremonial law of the Jews was far from being a final and complete rule of life and worship—did but prefigure blessings that were to follow it, that it was a tutor to lead men to the school of Christ.

III. Thirdly, the Jewish law or religion brought men to Christ by creating a sense of moral need which He alone could satisfy; for it was not merely a collection of prophecies or a code of ceremonial: it was also, and chiefly, a body of moral precepts respecting conduct. The duty of the sacred people, the duty of its kings and its priests, the duty of each individual Israelite towards God and towards his fellow-man—these it ruled in detail. The Ten Commandments are, at this moment, the moral rule of Christendom, and, as might be shown, if time sufficed, they contain, in a compendious form, an exhaustive statement of human duty towards the author of our being, and towards our fellow-creatures. It was this law which the pious Israelite embroidered on his robe. It was this law of which the King of Israel sang that it was an undefiled law converting the soul; that, as the testimony of the Lord, it was sure, giving wisdom to the simple; that, as the statutes of the Lord, it was right and rejoiced the heart; that, as the commandment of the Lord, it was pure, giving light unto the eyes, and that, as a whole, more to be

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desired was it than gold, 'yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.'

Such was the moral law given to Israel, and yet, practically, it seemed to be a failure. It was not kept. Even the best Israelites did not keep it, while the greater number neglected it altogether. S. Paul quotes from the Jewish scriptures severe sentences which, taken broadly, describe what was the condition of Israel in his own day. 'It is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become abominable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' And, as he proceeds, the severity of the description grows apace. 'Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.' And then the Apostle anticipates a Jewish objection, that this language for the most part describes, in the original, the moral condition of heathens, not of Jews; and he answers it by appealing to a principle insisted on by the Jewish doctors themselves, that the law spoke, in the first instance, not to all the world but only to the chosen people. 'We know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law.' Israel was, in fact—he and they knew it—Israel was, in fact, as bad as its sacred books described. It made its boast in the law, but in breaking the law it dishonoured God.

How was this to be explained? How was it consistent, men have asked, with the Creator's wisdom that He should have given to His people a law which He must have foreseen would not be observed? S. Paul answers this by saying that the law was given to teach man an ideal or a rule of righteousness, and thereby it discovered to him his own sinfulness and weakness. 'Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions.' It brought them to light: it carried the lamp of moral truth into the dark places of the human conscience. It taught sinful man to see himself, at least in part, as God sees him. Nay, it did more. The presence of this divine rule of right stimulated the dormant sinfulness of human nature to new activity. 'Without the law sin was dead, but when the commandment came sin revived.' 'But is not this,' it might have been asked—'Is not this a heavy indictment against the divine author of the law, that it might actually promote the energy of sin?' 'No,' the Apostle replies: 'the real promoter of sin is not the law, but the debased dispositions of man.' Good food is poison to a diseased body. The sunshine only shrivels the sickly plant, but the food and

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the sunshine are God's blessing, notwithstanding, to healthy natures. And the moral law is not in itself less holy and just and good because sinful man is irritated by it into new acts of disobedience. 'What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.'

The moral law—God's essential indestructible moral nature in its relation to human life, thrown for practical purposes, into the form of commandments—the moral law is essentially, necessarily, beyond criticism; but when given to sinful man it does, but without grace, discover a want which it cannot satisfy. Nay, such was man's condition in that older dispensation that it was the occasion of aggravating the evil which it could not heal, and thus it was that the moral law like the Jewish ritual—like Jewish prophecy, but with more effective power than either, led man down to the school of the Redeemer. It disclosed wants, heartaches, miseries, which He alone could heal and satisfy. It enhanced the aching sense of unpardoned sin before a holy God. 'Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood.'

And the law, further, convinced man of his moral weakness as well as of his guilt—of his inability without the strengthening grace of Christ ever to obey it. But then 'what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' To Christ the law leads down, not merely as a pardoner of guilt, but as a giver—as a source—of moral force which will do what man of his own strength cannot possibly do. This new life of obedience prompted from within by a new moral power, and not imposed from without upon moral decrepitude, S. Paul calls 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.' It is the gift of our divine and gracious Master—His greatest and most signal gift to those who simply accept Him.

How it is claimed must be discussed, please God, hereafter. For

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the present, let us observe what we may learn from the Jewish law that is thus described as leading us as a tutor to Jesus Christ.

1. In these words we see a test of the value of all religious privileges or gifts. Do they or do they not lead souls to Christ? That is the question. It is the supreme question for a Christian. In S. Paul's eyes it was the high distinction of the Jewish law that it could thus lead the Jewish people to faith in—to love for—the divine Redeemer; and this surely is the criterion which we Christians should apply to the several agencies, persons, privileges, pursuits, which bear upon or which belong to religion. Are they likely to make us give more of our thought and heart and will to our Saviour; or will they interest us mainly in themselves, and so keep us at a distance from Him? Doubtless in this matter a great deal depends upon a man himself. The majority of the people of Israel were not led to Christ in S. Paul's day, but the fault did not lie with the Jewish law; and if in the present day we hear, as we do sometimes hear, people saying, that Church privileges do not lead them to Christ, the explanation, I apprehend, is not to be found in the services of the Church, which are full of Christ from first to last, but in something wrong in these persons themselves. Unless there be in the soul that sacred yearning for better things which will make most of the opportunities offered to it, no external privilege will of itself lead to the knowledge and to the love of the Redeemer. In all generations some souls appear to live on crumbs, while others perish amid profusion. This man has no divine worship at hand, no communions, no religious friendships, no instruction; yet he gathers up the fragments which remain in memory of a privileged boyhood; and for him the wilderness blossoms as the rose. And that man lives surrounded by all the means of grace, flooded by the light which streams from heaven, and yet he might as well be a heathen. This man finds in the divine Scripture only arguments to justify his unbelief: that man can see in a mere human philosophy the reasons for all the rudiments of faith. But, bearing this in mind, it still remains true that the effect of a practice, or a friendship, or a line of thought, or a taste, is, generally speaking, to be tested by the simple practical question whether it does or does not bring the soul nearer to our Lord—whether, like the Jewish law, it is a tutor who keeps the great Master's claim upon his pupil steadily and exclusively in view, or whether it is something else.

2. Observe, too, what may be the religious use of all law—all rule—to the human soul. It should teach man to know from experience something of his weakness, and so should lead him to throw himself upon a higher power for pardon and for strength. The moral law written, indistinctly, on the hearts of the heathen did this great ser-

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vice for the Gentile world. It made the thoughtful heathen look upwards for traces of the invisible law-giver. It rendered him dissatisfied with his own efforts to achieve that which he knew to be certainly right. It led him to yearn, however vaguely, for pardon and for strength, to be received at the hands of an unseen Friend. The rules which we Christians make for our daily lives may help us in the same sort of way. No prudent Christian will live without some rule of life—a rule about prayer, about self-examination, about communions, about personal expenditure, about intercourse with others, about the employment of time, about the study of Scripture, about the management of the temper and the thoughts and the feelings and the resolves of the will. And such a rule is meant, no doubt, to be kept; and in the Church of Jesus Christ, with the aid of His supernatural grace, it can be kept. Every Christian may say with S. Paul, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.’ But, practically, for the great majority of us, such a rule acts just as the old Jewish law did for the Jews. It is a tutor to bring us afresh, again and again, with a new sense of guilt and of dependence and of weakness, to the feet of our gracious Master. That rule was made, perhaps it was accepted—in some moment of penitence, of fervour, and that moment has passed. Since then we have gone through a time of darkness—of depressed moral effort—of enfeebled resolutions—of shattered hopes, if through nothing worse. And so, with our broken rule of life in our hands, we turn to Him in whose strength we had hoped to keep it. ‘Lord,’ we cry, ‘lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Could my tears for ever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and Thou alone.”

Our rule of life itself, just like the Jewish moral law of old, has done us this good service: it has brought us, as a private tutor, down to the school and to the Cross of Christ.

3. And, lastly, in these words we see, or we ought to see, the exceeding preciousness of Christ’s gospel—the matchless value of that faith which lives in the heart of the Church of God. Men sometimes ask the question, whether the gospel, too, is not to be, in turn, a tutor-religion, whose business it is to lead to a something beyond—to some broad and grand and transcendental religion of the future which will control the hearts and the thoughts of the coming generations. The answer is—it must be—from every believing Christian—‘No!

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A thousand times no !' On the one hand, the gospel does or may satisfy all the deepest wants of the human soul—the need of freedom, of peace, of a sense of re-established relations with God, of a good hope for the everlasting future. I say the gospel is so far from pointing to a coming religion which will supersede it, that it everywhere proclaims its own finality. Its motto is, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Those minds who look beyond it, or would stray beyond it, will, assuredly, find themselves in a blank outer darkness in which even that which the Jewish law could do for them will be left undone. Those who thankfully endeavour, day by day, according to their light, to make the most of it will, as the years pass, have increasing cause to say, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Depend upon it, the religion of Jesus is God's last word to the soul of man. And how should not we prize the privilege of having received it! Surely this privilege is not a thing to be taken for granted—to be acquiesced in with the tranquil languid apathy with which a Pagan or a Mahometan might receive from his parents his hereditary creed. Each Christian here should glow with a personal sense of love for our divine Redeemer; and this sense must be based on a felt need of Him, and on the recollection that only in the fulness of time He came to satisfy the wants of an expecting world. Mark His own words, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that ye see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that ye hear and have not heard them.' Why thus blessed? Because Christ, known and loved, is the revelation of the character and the heart of God. Why thus blessed? Because Christ, known and loved, is the fount of pardon, grace, and strength for lost and sinful man. Once more, why thus blessed? Because Christ—and this, we may say reverently, was in His own divine mind and in the mind of His Apostle—because Christ, revealed to man as Incarnate, teaching, crucified, risen, ascended, interceding, closes a long period of weary expectation,—because He is the rest of souls after centuries of labour,—because He is the dawn of day after long ages of darkness and twilight. 'When the fulness of time was come God sent forth,' from His abyss of eternal glory, 'His Son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' Let us pray that in thought and act we may duly prize that which was so long withheld,—that for which our Jewish predecessors were prepared by the tutorial services of their ancient law. Let us, indeed, thank our good God for the gifts of nature—'for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life,' but above all, let us thank Him now, and until

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the end, 'for His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.'

H. P. LIDDON.

The Commandment exceeding broad.

I have seen an end of all perfection : but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

PSALM cxix. 96.

I see that all things come to an end : but Thy commandment is exceeding broad. P.B.V.

THE text describes the difference between everything that is of man and everything that is of God. The one has limits, has an end: the other is exceeding broad. Human perfection of all kinds has a visible term and bound: human excellence, human power, human knowledge, human life itself, comes to an end, and is not: but God's commandment, that which God has ordained, that which God has taught, that which God has made known, or is willing to make known, of Himself, of His will, of His truth, of His character, of His glory, is exceeding broad: there is an amplitude in it, and a grandeur, and an abundance, and an expansiveness, which forbids any feeling of straitness or of stint or of cramping: a man may walk and run, as far as he will, in any direction, and he will never find himself at a fence or a boundary: the truth of God, the revelation, the character of God, is infinite like God Himself, and it is His will that we should expatiate in this domain without let or hindrance, without prohibition and without coercion.

The thought thus suggested is a very glorious one, and I propose it for your meditation. 'I see that all things else come to an end: but Thy commandment, Thy revelation, is exceeding broad.' The contrast is that between man's narrowness, in every sense of that word, and God's amplitude, God's grandeur, God's large and satisfying magnificence. We must reflect upon this contrast in some of its particulars.

I. 'I see that all things come to an end': but, 'Thy word endureth for ever in heaven.' What an impression is forced upon us, by the progress of life, of the poverty of man and all that belongs to him, in point of duration! What a dream is earthly ambition, earthly consequence, earthly rank and wealth and honour! We ourselves have lived to see men pass through greatness into nothingness. We have flocked to look upon the form of some great general or statesman or potentate, who is now dust and ashes. We have hung upon the lips of some eloquent orator, speaking of things concerning national interest, or interests greater still; interests of the soul, secrets of eternity; and those lips are now for ever closed and silent. Others are now the powerful men, the admired men, the revered men - and we are curious, for a day, about them: it is their

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turn: soon it will be the turn of yet another; soon will the stage be occupied by a new set of actors, and gazed upon by a new set of spectators. 'I see that all things come to an end.'

How comforting then, how satisfying, ought it to be to us, to know of just one thing which will not thus fail and terminate! Thy commandment, Thy word! that which God has spoken, whether in the way of disclosure, or of command, or of warning, or of promise. That endures; endureth, as the Psalmist says, for ever in heaven. The march of centuries affects not that. Human opinion, worldly change, the fluctuations of thought or fashion, the rise and fall of men and of nations, work no alteration there.

The Word of God, spoken once with the voice, and now preserved by writing from adulteration and from decay, endures for all time, and is vocal to all sorts and conditions of men: in every land and age, he that is of God, heareth God's Word, and finds in it, whosoever he be, a light to his mind, and a lamp to his steps. 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad.'

II. 'I have seen an end of all perfection.' That which has been said of human life may be said also of human character. We have spoken of man's limits in point of duration; he and all his—enjoyments, projects, interests, attainments, glories—are essentially short-lived and transitory; but the other version of the text seems to extend the remark to a further point; that human excellence, human goodness, has a bound, and a narrow one; if you sound it you reach the bottom; if you measure it, you can take its compass: there is an end of all human perfection, as there is an end of all human duration.

Surely, if in one sense with awe, in another and a higher sense with comfort, we look off from man's littleness to God's greatness, and learn to say, not with humility only, but with thankfulness, 'I have seen an end of all perfection: but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.'

III. The breadth of God's Word in contrast with the narrowness of human doctrine is a topic full of interest. How does the Bible comprehend, and gather into one, all the good parts of the human systems of theology that were ever framed! Every form of error within the Christian community in any age of the Church has arisen, not from the invention of a falsehood, but from the distortion of a truth.

'Thy commandment is exceeding broad': our doctrine, if it is true, must be able to stand this test. Is it the whole, or is it only one part, of the whole counsel of God, as revealed to us in Scripture? Does it embrace within its compass all that God has said; so far, at least, as to exclude and to deny, to force and to mutilate nothing? Few indeed are those ministries, or those schemes of doctrine of

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which this can be said. God grant us the wisdom to aim at it and to attain to it, in some measure, in our own!

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Justification by Faith.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. GALATIANS iii. 24.

THAT we might be justified by faith.' Truly, these are words across which the fierce passions of controversy have swept for centuries; and controversies are apt to leave deposits, which obscure, even in sincere and simple minds, the sense of the sacred writer, when he wrote the words. What does the Apostle mean by 'justified'? He means made just or righteous. And what is righteousness or justice? As applied to man, it means a man's being as he should be: it means the conformity, the inner and true conformity, of his life with the standard of that which is good, absolutely good and true. One of the questions which prominently engaged the attention of the Jewish doctors was this, how it was possible for men to attain to righteousness, or justice, and their answer always was 'By keeping the law.' For them the law was the rule of righteousness. The Jew who kept the law was righteous. But then, the question which S. Paul pressed on them, again and again, was whether any Jew did really keep it; or rather, he quoted the law itself, with very great effect, to show that, so far from being kept, it was, as a rule, neglected. 'There is,' said the law, 'none righteous, no not one,' and, 'therefore,' concludes the Apostle, 'therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.'

And thus the question arises whether any other method of justification, that is, of becoming what we should be, is attainable. And S. Paul answers that question in the text. The law, he said, led its best pupils down to the school of Christ that they might be justified, not by their own efforts to obey its precepts, but by a very different process, which would in the end, indeed, secure obedience and a great deal else, that they might be justified by faith.

And here a difficulty presents itself, which very naturally and very seriously exercised thoughtful minds in successive ages, and not least in our own. How is it possible, men ask, that such a mere motion or emotion of the soul, as faith, can achieve this startling and solid result, the making a soul to be as it should be before a holy God? A change of conduct, yes, that they conceive, may make the necessary difference. Conduct is something tangible, something producible.

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Conduct is a thing which can be weighed and measured. But faith, how airy, how unsubstantial, how disconnected from any solid, permanent results on character. How nearly allied to the fanciful, to the imaginative. How can faith justify? How can so serious an effect be traced to so inadequate or ineffective a cause? Now, the answer to this inquiry can only be given by stating what faith really is. And, perhaps, we shall best state what faith is, while we proceed to answer the question, how it is that faith justifies or makes men as they should be before God, the All-seeing, the All-holy.

I. Now, here we may observe at the outset that, looking at the surface of the matter, faith does, for the believing man, at least one great and striking service, which of itself goes some way to making him what he should be. Faith raises the aims, the purposes, the thoughts of man from the seen to the unseen, from the material to the immaterial, from earth to or towards heaven. What is man's condition without faith, without that world of glorious but unseen, realities which faith makes present? It is the condition of a slave. Unbelieving man is always a slave, the slave of nature, the slave of matter. When no higher world than the world of sense is open to man's view, he falls back under the cruel and exacting bondage of sense and nature. His horizon is that of his bodily senses, neither more nor less, his thoughts and feelings are bounded by that which he can see, can taste, can handle or claw, can smell. To him the visible world is the universe. To him, he himself, and his brother man, is but an animal, a magnificent animal no doubt, yet nothing but an animal. He notes with eager and jealous accuracy how the process of birth and growth, and disease, and death, and decomposition, are the same in his own case, and that of the brutes around him. With him, feeling is only nervous sensibility; thought is only phosphorus, the soul, a non-existent abstraction which man in his petty vanity has coaxed out of the higher illusions of his senses. And thus he buries his thought deep in the very folds of matter. And his thought, mark you, may be all the while exceptionally keen and strong, yet not therefore the less enslaved to matter. Perhaps he has no turn for abstract speculations, and nevertheless in the absence of faith he is still occupied, nearly or wholly occupied, by that which comes in contact with the senses. His shop, or his broad acres, or his family circle, or his enjoyments, are for him the universe; he sees no horizon beyond. And since nothing is more certain than the law whereby we men, each one of us, become likened to that on which we gaze, heavenly, if we are looking upward, earthly, or worse, if we are looking downward, it follows that the man who lives in and for matter will gather more and more of its thick grossness around his spirit.

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And if his understanding warns him that the material world which is his all, will pass, and if, in his higher moments, voices sound from out the depths of his being to protest impatiently that matter does not satisfy, still the motto of those who are taking their fill of sense, whether in its grosser or more refined forms, is, in the last resort, always this, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' The nobler minds of every generation have felt the misery of this. They have felt that man was meant for a higher destiny than this enslavement to nature, to matter, to sense; and, in the absence of any better expedients, they have endeavoured to provide an escape by the exercise of the intelligence, and the exercise of the imagination, in other words, by poetry and by philosophy.

II. Poetry is, at least very frequently, the endeavour to invest human life with the glow and beauty of a higher sphere. Poetry is the protest of the human soul against enslavement to the prosaic uniformity of materialised existence. Poetry is the effort of the imagination to provide an outlook for all in man that will not, that cannot, consent to believe that man is nothing but a highly organised animal. And philosophy is the endeavour to ascend without the emotion which is characteristic of poetry, to ascend from that which meets the senses to that which is beyond the senses, to mount always from the observed effect to the hidden and producing cause, to construct, if it may be, an account and a theory of universal being, and, in the process of doing so, to provide for the thought of man an asylum, or rather a throne, beyond and above the frontiers of matter. And thus, in their different ways, philosophy and poetry imply the degradation of merely materialised life by their efforts to better it. And I am very far from denying that they have, each of them, made noble contributions to the higher side of human existence. Sometimes, indeed, in the great Christian ages, they have been the willing handmaids of faith herself; but, even in the centuries when this was impossible, they have done something to raise the human spirit out of the narrow prison-house of matter. And Homer, and Æschylus, and Socrates, and Plato, with whatever reserves, will be names held in high honour to the end of time. But, whatever poetry and philosophy might achieve for a few individuals, or in the hands of great masters, they do not, in the long run, free the minds of men from the tyranny of matter. Indeed, their fitful efforts to achieve this may remind us of the flying machine which it was attempted to construct some thirty years ago on the banks of the Thames. Imagination, such is the verdict of experience, imagination, if unsustained by a heaven-born companion like faith, does not mount upwards in one generation to surrender itself in the next, almost at discretion, to the grossest suggestions of

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the senses. And philosophy, if not based on certainties beyond the reach of sense, does but construct its imposing abstractions in one age to shatter them into fragments in the next, and then it ends, as with the Epicureans of antiquity, as with the school which has last appeared on the scene, in Germany, it ends by plunging headlong into matter with a new and impetuous enthusiasm, and prostituting its powers to reconstructing the very fetters from which, centuries ago, in its fresh and early youth, it promised us emancipation.

No, if man is to be freed from the empire of sense and nature, it must be through his endowment with a new faculty, such as is faith; and faith is a new kind of sight which opens upon the soul a world wholly beyond the reach of the bodily senses. Faith is practically a new sense, a sense, whose business it is to discern God, and all that teaches His nature and His action upon the world and upon mankind.

III. Faith makes the man who possesses it to differ from the man who has it not, much as a person in the enjoyment of good bodily sight differs from a blind man. 'Faith,' as the Apostle puts it, 'is the substance of things hoped for; it is the evidence of things not seen.' It is evidence to itself, sufficient evidence, of the reality of its object; and thus faith cannot but at least elevate man, with the unseen world spread out before him, the magnificence, the infinitude of the Divine Being, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ upon His throne, both God and Man, the unnumbered angelic intelligences around the throne, the little suspected, but constant, incessant, communications passing between earth and heaven. Faith introduces the soul of man to a new sphere in which the soul is sensibly bettered, if only by this, by having its attention distracted from the petty material interests of daily human life, and fixed on the splendours of the unseen, of the eternal; and thus faith does raise the soul of man heavenwards, and this elevation of the soul, more solid and permanent than anything which can possibly be provided by poetry or philosophy, in that it brings the soul face to face with the true and the unchanging being, is of itself a considerable step in the direction of making a man what he should be, in other words, of his justification.

And a second service which faith renders to man, is this; it expands and strengthens all the department of his spirit's life, his will and his affections not less than his understanding. And this wide and comprehensive scope of its action upon the soul of itself does much to make man what he should be, since not one power or faculty is invigorated by it, but all. There we come face to face with a great and common misconception, the mistake, I mean, of supposing that faith is only a mere act of apprehension, only a

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simple movement of the understanding apprehending truth beyond the province of sense. Such an act of apprehension as this can only be faith by courtesy, for faith in its origin, as well as in its growth and vitality, is a prompting of the heart and the will, at least as much as of the understanding. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' and this moral element in faith is the guarantee of its power to change the character. If we doubt this, let us try to explain to ourselves how it is that of two heathens similarly circumstanced, to whom the gospel is preached by a Christian missionary, one accepts, and the other rejects it; or how it is, as we may see in many an English home, that of two brothers who have had equally the same education, one is a devout Christian and the other an unbeliever. The explanation which is often given refers this difference to God's secret and eternal predestination of souls. The old words, 'He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth,' seem to yield a stern but an adequate solution. But God's predestination of souls, however true and solemn a fact, is only half of the truth which explains the soul's destiny. It is equally true, though we may be unable to reconcile this truth with the foregoing, it is equally true that every soul determines its own destiny, and that God's predestination is never really arbitrary in the sense of being independent of the soul's secret, self-determined history. When, of the two heathens I am considering, one man accepts the faith as it is proposed to him, and the other rejects it, this, we may be sure, so far as the man is concerned, is not an accident: it is an effect of causes which have been already long in duration. If these two men have known from infancy nothing else, they have known this, that there is a distinction between right and wrong, since this knowledge is part of the human soul. What is right and what is wrong, that they may have apprehended very imperfectly. They cannot have been ignorant that this primal distinction exists. And this distinction of itself, observe, this distinction implies a law, a law of right as distinct from wrong; and a law implies a lawgiver. Who is He? What is He? What can be known about Him? Will He ever reveal Himself? These are questions which will be repeated again and again in the one mind, eager, by searching, to find out God, ready to make the most of anything which He may disclose about Himself; but they will be repressed and silenced in the other mind, as if they were the mere echoes of some stupid superstition. The distinction between right and wrong, itself, it has been said, by one who felt thus, in the midst of Christian civilisation, can only be upheld by a man with a bad digestion. Well, then, on this original difference in the way of treating the sense, the implanted sense of right and wrong will

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subsequently depend the different kinds of welcome given to the missionary, nay, the grave difference between faith and unbelief. The one man wishes to know nothing of the author of the moral law that haunts him. The other wishes to know as much as he can. And thus, to the one man, the evidence that God has revealed Himself will appear wholly insufficient. To the other it will seem to be nothing less than overwhelming.

And thus we see how faith is originally prompted by the moral affections, and the will—how, in point of fact, it grows directly out of these. Men believe, because they wish to believe, if they can, and think that the evidence they have warrants them in doing so. They reject belief, as a rule, because there is a secret warp in their will against the truths which are the objects of faith. ‘Light,’ said our Lord, ‘Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.’ And as faith is cradled in the heart and the will, so it is never independent of them. It is an act of the moral nature, as well as of the understanding, from first to last. No doubt the word faith is used, by an accommodation, of mere unfruitful knowledge of divine things, as when S. James says that the devils believe and tremble: The devils think of God just as a scientific man might think of a natural catastrophe, which he was certain would occur, say the outbreak of a volcano, or a hurricane. They think of God with intelligence, with curiosity, but also with aversion. Having, as they have at command, the opportunities of disembodied spirits, whether good or evil, they cannot close their eyes to God’s existence, to His power; but they recognise Him only to fear and to hate Him. They believe, and yet tremble. This is an extreme example of the apprehension of God divorced from love. But something like it may be observed in all who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The faith, of which S. Paul says so much in his epistles, is inseparable from love, inseparable in life and fact, though quite separable in idea in our way of looking at it. As the illuminated understanding gazes on the majesty and on the attributes of God, on the person and the redeeming work of Christ, the heart is withal kindled, and the will is braced. Faith which deserves the name worketh ever, and it worketh by love. Faith may be taken to pieces by students and divines; its elements may be sorted out; its mental element may be studied apart from the ingredients of love and of resolution which go to make it up, just as the anatomist in our hospitals may treat the arterial system apart from the nervous system of the human body, although, in the living subject, each is essential to its vitality. We may, if we like, fix our eyes only on the concave, but it always implies the convex. Those who have gone furthest in the direction of saying

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that faith, considered as pure mental apprehension of the person and merits of Christ, can justify before God, have not, so far as I know, ventured to say that any one human being is justified who is quite without a ray of the love of God in his soul. No. Read through the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to see what faith is in itself, how practical, how productive a thing it is, how much it leads those who really possess it, upon occasions, to do and to suffer; and then you will understand how it enriches the whole inward life, how powerfully it contributes to make man what he should be, in other words to his justification.

III. But, thirdly and finally, the greatest service which faith renders is this: it receives at God's hand the perfect righteousness of Christ. Faith is itself a hand which the soul extends towards the heavens, or with which it grasps the Redeemer's Cross. That which really makes us men what we should be is not, cannot be, in or of ourselves. It comes to us from without, from the one perfect and sinless Being. And faith is the receptive faculty, or the receptive act, whereby the soul makes this prerogative gift of justification altogether its own. S. Paul is never tired of saying that man cannot be as he should be, that he cannot be just or righteous, without Jesus Christ. The Jew cannot, because, although he had a revealed law, he did not keep it. The heathen cannot. He, too, has a natural law written on his heart, but he falls short of it. The heathen do not seem, as far as the Apostle's experience goes, to have supposed that they were absolutely righteous. The Jew did go about to establish his own righteousness, not submitting himself to the righteousness of God. But the hard fact is that 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' and, therefore it is that justification, properly speaking, can only come to us from without. Faith itself would not justify. Faith would lack its elevating, its productive power, if it had not before it an object utterly independent of human sin and of human weakness, an object divine, unchanging, immaculate. We cannot raise ourselves from the dust. A moral law of gravitation keeps the fallen race down. We must be lifted, if at all, by a hand reached out to us from above. If justified at all, we must be 'justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'

Yes, Christ Jesus, who alone of those who have worn the human form is as He should be, whose life, public and secret, conforms perfectly to the absolute rule of right, Christ Jesus, the beloved Son in whom the all-perfect Father is well pleased, is the source of justification to all His brethren. He has done away with their imperfections by bearing their sins in His Body on the tree. He has given them a share in His obedience, His transcending and pre-

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vailing merits. He is their peace. He is made to them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. It is not that His righteousness is accredited to them by a kind of fiction, without being conveyed. It is accredited or imputed because it is already in His purposes of mercy conveyed, because, in His generous love, he consents to share it with the poorest and the weakest of His brethren. On His part, this great gift, purchased in its completeness on His Cross, is conveyed by His Spirit and by His Sacraments. His Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, because it is His work to make us partakers in the perfect manhood of the divine Redeemer. His Sacraments could have no place at all in a religion like His unless it were a place of the very first importance. Mere graceless forms would be intruders in a dispensation where forms and shadows have given place once for all to the everlasting realities. It is through these channels that He dispenses what He has won, nay, rather, what He is. 'As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' 'The Bread that I give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

But, on our part, how are these treasures to be claimed? How is the human soul to grasp this righteousness of God in Christ? The answer is 'by faith.'

Faith is the hand which the soul holds out in order to receive the gifts of heaven. In the case of every adult it is indispensable. God may in His mercy take infants up in His arms and bless them. The grace of regeneration, like the gift of natural life, may be conferred on those who are as yet unconscious of its greatness. But, as Augustine has said, 'He who made us without ourselves, He who re-made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves,' without our conscious and deliberate acceptance of His salvation. And this acceptance of God's final gift is effected by faith. Faith is the spiritual act whereby the soul associates itself with the perfect moral Being, Jesus Christ, whereby it make His righteousness, His obedience, His sufferings, its own—whereby it lays strong hold upon His Cross, as on the very source and warrant of its victory—whereby it draws from His Sacraments the virtue which He in His redemptive love has lodged in them—whereby the sinner, penitent and self-renouncing, is forthwith clad in His garments of salvation, and covered with His robe of righteousness, and bidden to sit down in the heavenly places in the Eternal Father's home. Yes, faith is the action of the awakened soul, consciously face to face with its Redeemer and its God. In a being capable of it, it is indispensable. Without faith there may be vigorous physical and mental life, but the spirit is dead. It must raise us from the dust of earth. It—the product of affection and of will—must rouse will and affection to

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renewed activity. Above all, it—faith—the spirit of prayer—must be a suppliant, an importunate suppliant, kneeling on the steps of the throne of heaven to receive for man—we may dare to say to claim for man—the perfections which man cannot himself command, and which alone can make himself to be what he should be—the priceless gift of his justification through Christ. ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.’

Let us rouse ourselves to beg God to give us in new measure this great and necessary grace, without which, as His Apostle has said, it is impossible to please Him. Now, as in bygone days, faith is given—faith is strengthened—in answer to prayer. ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ ‘Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.’ These breathings of the human soul eighteen centuries ago are not less powerful with God now than in the days of old, nor are the issues which depend upon their being answered less momentous, whether in time or in eternity.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Pharisee as a Religious Expert.

Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

S. MATTHEW xvi. 9.

THE Pharisee was the man who knew, the initiated. He could discern and pronounce on the methods of morals and religion with qualified and professional accuracy. He had the scientific religion, the rules and methods and conditions under which God could be properly approached. He knew so much more about this than other men, they must come to him to learn their lesson, he was the corrector of the ignorant, the teacher of babes. Now, we are all familiar with the temper and the attitude that the expert is apt to acquire. The exclusive temper of the profession—how it daunts us who are of the uninitiated! how it quails our loose and airy amateur ways of speaking! The musical expert, for instance, who just lets us know, by dropping a few technical phrases upon us, how far we are from being within the circle of those who are qualified to speak. We cannot cope with his smile at our untechnical terms. He is within the ring of scientific authority, and we are outside it. Evidently our blundering attempts to express what we feel have violated some canon of taste or other, have revealed our total ignorance of some essential rule, we do not quite know what it is, in which we are wrong, but we see in his face that he considers our simple remarks to be absolutely worthless. He is too courteous not to pretend to listen, but he is not paying us the slightest attention, and we

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feel the shadow of his contempt fall on us, and our courage flags. It is no use our talking, we had better be silent ; so we think, and he evidently perfectly agrees with us. Or the expert in ritual—here is an expert who is also a terror to us. We venture on a chance observation, and we have let out some unhappy expression that reveals that we do not know in the least the distinction between the Gallican and Sarum use, and in a moment we are out of spirit—we have lost all standing-ground. Our confusion is explained to us with kindly precision, and we are humbled, we resign the conversation to those initiated, who can discourse in the true language that is all the more pleasant because it is so bewildering to those that are without.

I. Now, in such cases we can laugh at our own discomfiture, and, indeed, it is very often good to learn that, in a scientific matter, the easy suggestions of an amateur are not so important as they are apt to appear to the person who makes them. But in religion the temper of the expert becomes a positive and perilous temptation. It is deadly to religion to become in any sense the appropriated prize of the privileged few. In all matters of high scientific knowledge this of course is inevitably the case. Only the few have the requisite leisure and the appropriate faculties to acquire the particular skill in this or that branch of learning. There must of necessity be a close exclusive ring of skilled authorities who alone are entitled to speak. This is the condition of intellectual knowledge—it must be largely in the hands of trained experts. But then it is just because it is so that religion has never based itself primarily on the intellect, on knowledge. Whenever it has done so it has tended to make itself at once the privilege of the few, and in doing this has committed the blunder which is fatal to its life. It was the deadly result which forbade Platonism ever to pass outside the schools and to become an operative faith in the world. It strove to do this in the great reaction of Neo-platonism in the third century, but it could make no way against the onward push of Christianity, cumbered as it was by its fatal distinction between the esoteric truth of the few and the exoteric condition of the many. And the Church, we know, recognised and repudiated the same temptation in the subtle fascinations of Alexandrian Gnosticism. Once rest religion on Gnosis or knowledge, and the religious expert is bound to appear on the scene, the skilled proficient in the spiritual science must seem to stand on a higher religious level than the untrained mass of ignorant men ; and let me repeat, to allow this is to strike at the very root of religion, for religion is bound by its very nature to be the great equalising force which shall get behind all the separations and distinctions which part man from man, behind all that makes one man a barbarian and another a cultivated Greek, one man a bondsman and another man

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free, one man gifted and another man simple, one man rich and another man poor. These differences are all real enough, God knows. They have their place, their part to play, but for all that they do not constitute the final fact of human nature. Deep below all incidental differences of capacity, of opportunity, of education, of race, and of sex, lies the fundamental unity which holds all in one touch of innermost nature which makes all akin. And religion, which enters deepest into man, enters down to the lowest recesses of his being, must strike its roots down into this primitive and unchanging unity.

II. It is religion on which we count to detect and unearth for us this inner sense of community which is so sorely strained by the competition of rival divergencies. That competition of race against race, and gift against gift, of capital against labour, of supply and demand, must of necessity continue. Out of it proceeds some part of the fulness of our civic activity; but just because it has to continue is it so urgent for us to balance and to correct its separating force by a counter force of attractive, sympathetic, co-operative tendency, which shall recover for us, and retain, and assert the substantial unity still alive at the base. The more men plead for the necessities of competition, the more emphatically do they assert the necessity of its co-ordinate and corrective antithesis. If we compete, then there must be that which can balance and redress the exaggerations of competition, and if civilisation tends, as it does, in many ways to intensify our difference one from another, then civilisation must always be crying out also for that which can intensify our common humanity. And it is religion on which we primarily count to do this for us, to equalise, to universalise; it is the only power that fully can, for it is the only power that can dig down low enough in that which makes us men to arrive at that common and universal substance which makes us all children of one Father, citizens of one kingdom, heirs of one home, limbs of one body, members one of another. Religion appeals to that which is at the very base of our life, to that which, in making us men, gives us an immediate interest in everything that is human. It appeals to that which makes no man a stranger to his fellows, makes every one his brother's keeper, makes our affairs to be every one's affairs and every one's affairs to be ours. And this is why civilisation increases our need for a religion, for it renders more and more urgent the demand for this force which can control and overthrow the intensified differences which it is apt to create, and can rescue and redeem for us that peace of brotherhood which it by itself is prone to weaken and disguise. Religion alone can fully do this on behalf of civilisation, and this signalises for us two emphatic claims that we make for our own religion.

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1. First, Christianity is for this reason, we say, the very crown of all religions, in that it achieves for us that which other religions had but partially proclaimed. It undertakes to complete the cardinal office of the faith when it offers us a Son of Man in whose single unity all distinctions are transcended, all divergencies disappear, in whom there is no barrier between man and man, no privileged position or special honour allowed, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Greek nor barbarian, neither bond nor free. This is the aim at which the spirit in us struggles to attain, and the very completeness with which Christianity can offer to meet the demand of the human spirit for unity is the measure of its catholicity. It is adapted for all peoples, and tongues, and nations, only so far as it can bring them that which goes down beneath all that separates them into tongues, and nations, and peoples. And, again, this is why, as we believe with all our souls, Christianity is the one religion that can hope to meet the special needs of our advanced and intricate civilisation, because it can dare to override and dominate every conceivable difference of gift, or of condition, which our competitions can create. It can bring them all under a common standard, can reduce them all to a common level, it can undermine and overleap them, it can drag them before a judgment-bar at which they find themselves no longer absolute, by which they are re-sorted and resifted. It holds them down within the prevailing grip of a law by which the first may become the last, and the last first; it can present a hope in which all have an equal claim, an equal interest, an equal task, and an equal reward. It can deliver us out of the broil and tumult of competitive cries, carrying us off into that background of peace where all these weary and wasting differences cease and are forgotten, merged in the depths of that changeless unity which lies spread before the throne of God, and over which the spirit of brotherhood ever broods, the spirit that makes all to be of one mind in one house, knitting all in its one Lord by the power of one faith, through the mystery of one baptism, so that all are gathered up into one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all, and in you all. That is religion, and anything, therefore, that tends to limit it to privileged experts, that tends to confine the interests of religion within a ring-fence, within a narrow circle of skilled professors, which tends to form a stiff, rigid group of the devout, shut up within their own excellencies, and who look out at the main mass of men as those who, not knowing the law, are therefore accursed. Anything that does that cuts at the root of religion itself, cuts at the very root of our faith in Jesus Christ.

2. But perhaps you will say: 'Is not religion of necessity exclusive? Was it not foretold that it should be for the few, that it involved a strait gate and a narrow way, and that few would find it? Does

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it not call upon us to cut ourselves off from the multitude and from the world, and not to be afraid to be a little flock, separate and confined? And then, again, if science is exclusive, Christianity has its science. It has its moral science which builds up saints, and it has its intellectual science, the theology of the Creeds, and both these have the peculiarity of a science, they involve care, minute attention, deliberate pains, whether to form the saintly life, or to apprehend and secure the minutiae of the Catholic Creed; and such care, minute and scientific, such attention, never can be possible for the multitude, must always surely be the privilege of the few.' Now, in all such pleas as these there is just that half-truth which is for ever beguiling us religious people. This is just what is so apt to make us all Pharisees, to form in us the repellent temper of the professional spiritual expert. Let us look at these statements, these pleas, a little closer. There is a theological science, for instance, we say, and the science is of necessity exclusive, for the few. Exactly! and that is why the Church has so emphatically and continuously asserted that theological knowledge is not faith. It has always refused to identify its science with its religion. God, it proclaims, does not propose to save the world by dialectic. 'What boots it to talk deeply of the Holy Three,' says Thomas à Kempis, in well-known words, 'if, lacking humility, you grieve the Holy Three? Far rather would I feel sorrow for my sins than know how to define the feeling with accuracy.' The loud warning has ever gone out to man to beware lest in preaching to others, and preaching right, he himself becomes, after all, a castaway; lest, teaching in Christ's name, he himself be pronounced unknown at the last to the very Master whose gospel he has so successfully delivered to others. It is faith that saves, not theological accuracy, not syllogism. Faith is demanded of the Christian scientific expert in exactly the same sense in which it is demanded of the most ignorant man alive, the faith of the meek and humble spirit, the faith of the contrite heart. True, that faith holds in it theology, though theology need not hold in it faith. There is no sincere faith which cannot, under analysis, yield a rational account of itself—be theologically interpreted and justified. Faith that fails to give an intellectual response to such an analysis, properly conducted, must be a poor and sickly affair; but, for all that, the analysis is not faith, the faculty that justifies the faith is not that with which we believe. The faith may be there in all its fulness, and yet be just as unable to supply its own intellectual interpretations as an athlete may be to explain the splendid precision of his eye, or hand, or foot, for faith is not a mere activity of the understanding or the reason, but a motion, an act, of the inner sonship in man towards the Father whose life is in him. And such a motion, such an act, is

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possible to all equally, beneath all conceivable differences of condition, and may be far more deep and genuine in the ignorant and the poor than it is in the finest and subtlest brain in Christendom. Christianity, then, in claiming to have a theology, never suffers this its scientific and exclusive side to usurp for a moment its wide and catholic appeal to the elemental unity of all mankind through sonship to the Father.

Nor, again, does Christianity ever permit its moral science to limit its range to the few, great though has been its constant temptation. Certainly it invites some to a specialised life of piety; it asks them to withdraw from busy occupation and to give themselves up to the discipline of an ordered life of devotion; it urges them to attempt the peculiar task of developing the excellencies of the saints, such as can only be done by steady self-committal to fixed and painstaking rules, methods, aids, practices, such as are impossible to those engaged in worldly business, such as are only possible to some small knots of secluded people knit closely to one another, both by system and by sympathy. It asks for these, and it needs them; and a Church that is sterile in such typical expressions of its life, that has no soil in which to plant such souls as feel the call to this regulated life of piety, is below its true level, and is false to that Master, who to the eager-hearted soul that He loved made the offer, 'Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow Me.' And, thank God, our own Church, once so dry and so dead, is no longer barren of such rare fruit. But here, again, there must be no mistake. All such special efforts are morally doomed from the hour that they begin to assume to themselves a right to be the only true and formal embodiment of grace. The one deadly error of the monastic orders was to arrogate a speciality of grace. The moment this assumption is made, the moment that the secular life outside the religious discipline is treated as an inferior form of Christianity, as a condescension to the world, then, since far the largest section of believers must always be secular, Christianity has been made the peculiar privilege of the few, and the main mass of men and women are thrown outside the world of grace. But all Christian ethics protest against this assumption, and they do so by declaring that the only good thing which God asks for is the good will, is the sacrificial will, and that this good will may be made manifest, may be surrendered under the humblest and most earthly conditions as much as in the most secluded and select religious order. No system, however elaborate, can secure it, no circumstances, however base and rough, fail to give it its opportunity. The sacrifice of self, the only thing worth doing, this may be made always, equally and everywhere, and the more worldly and untractable the conditions the more precious may be the offering of the will

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which accepts the worst and turns it to spiritual profit. One soul may be called to make this act of will in one direction and one in another, one in the thick of the world and the other in the quiet retreat, but no man can say which call is more excellent in itself, and God may always be winning a more perfect fruit from the simple self-surrender of some poor and infirm crossing-sweeper than from all those who seven times a day bend low before His blessed altar in the hushed beauty hidden there of some breathless shrine.

III. So it is, Christianity is exclusive no doubt in its inward call ; it bids us come aside out of the world, to labour to enter at the strait gate, to go with the few along the narrow way. All this it does, and does austerely ; but though this call be exclusive, its interests are always catholic, and its outlook is always wide and universal, and nothing that is human is alien to it, and nothing that has ever been made is outside its concern. And the few then who are drawn apart are not drawn apart for themselves, for the sake of working out their own perfection. It is, as we know, for the sake of others, for the whole, that they are numbered among the elect souls ; it is on behalf of the many that the few are drawn apart ; they are to be the first-fruits by which the whole lump becomes holy, they are to be the seed which witnesses to the life yet stirring in the trunk of the tree which looks so dead ; they are to be pledges, witnesses before God of the possibilities yet open to His Church : and, as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob stood over the people of Israel, through the ages, interceding for them with their names, with God, so these saints are the pleas and the prayers sent up before God, that He may have patience, that He may have mercy upon all His stubborn and stiff-necked people. Pledges they are to God, and pledges, too, before men, and examples to them of the wonderful things their own Father which is in Heaven is longing to work out on all His children that are here on earth. Such is the sacred mission of the remnant and of the few, and so, if they remember it, then their interests can never be shut up within that spot of glorious light wherein they themselves are dwelling. From within that ring of light their eyes, their hearts go out far, roaming, yearning after those who know not as yet their joys, the black wide masses who grope in darkness and cannot find their peace. How pitiful to them is that darkness, how tenderly the hearts within the light grieve over the loss of those without ! ‘How is it that they will not know, how can they be told all that God would do for them if only they would let Him ? how can the message of His love reach to them ?’ So the saints keep crying out with ever-increasing tendency, and ever they learn that all their own holiness is solely of God, is none of their own doing, and that therefore there is no one in whom God would not and could not do all that

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He does in them. Any one might have it, any one might know it. There can be no merit in those who have by God's good mercy found it. They have been suffered to discover this secret first, but others, they too will find it out one day.

How dear, how precious does all this weltering, forlorn, bewildered human life become in their eyes as they see in themselves the care, the kindness, the love, the abundance which God is prepared to shower upon it. Their own growth in holiness is but a revelation to them how deeply God cares for all that is human, and so ever deeper and tenderer their own sympathy for humanity becomes, deepened and enriched as it is beyond its natural limits by the powers of divine compassion, which show themselves through it. And ever, as they learn, these saints, through their very pity for man, their own impotence to persuade him to open his eyes to the secret which might be his, as they learn that more and more ever they will be lifting their eyes with appealing tears to God who alone can bring light into the darkness, praying Him to make manifest to others that wonderful work which He has achieved for His own glory, praying that all may know, that all may become prophets, that all may speak with tongues, praying, and so rising ever nearer and nearer to the mighty outburst of S. Paul's great prayer, prayer for his own darkened people, his own brethren in the flesh: 'My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved:' 'before God I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness; I have great sorrow and increasing pain in my heart for them; yea, I could even wish myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, for my kinsmen according to the flesh.'

Dearly beloved, how is it that those of us who are led to believe in God are always losing hold of this high mission? Somehow we do still so often shut ourselves up within the ring-fence, so many do get to think that God's love is bounded by that which they happen to know of it. We do narrow down our vision and cramp our spiritual motives, so that the mighty issues of the Incarnation are all cut down to the measure of that particular insight which it is our blessed privilege to have been permitted to possess, our own favourite methods of approach to God, the methods which are to us the particular channels down which the grace has flowed in upon ourselves. These preoccupy so often our whole vision, these block up the horizon, and every other way by which God and man can come together. We distrust and disown, we see nothing to learn in it, and perhaps we think all those who are without our particular vision are Atheists, and so we become hard and cold, and the stiff tough shell of the Pharisee builds itself about us, and, instead of being pledges to those outside of the light and the joy to be found in Christ, we repel them,

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and we throw them back, and no touch of human sympathy goes out from us to win them home; rather they sheer off from us, they stare in surprise and dislike at us. And so we fail in our mission and disappoint God's working.

Take heed and beware of this leaven of the Pharisee, of this loveless and unlovely temper of the religious expert, of this faith which can, in its tough vigour, perhaps even give its body, in all bravery, to be burned, and yet hath not charity, and profiteth nothing. Our personal call, we repeat, is indeed to be exclusive, to be strict, to be rigid. God calls us to go forward on the narrow path, through the strait gate, along the path of ever sharpening discipline, cutting off all that is unprofitable. This is our personal, individual call. Woe to us if we are slack and easy-going; but while He asks us to be strict with ourselves, He desires that we shall, by the power of this strictness, learn the width, and height, and depth of His abounding love, that we should, by means of our fidelity to the single path of recovery open to us, learn to imagine by how many diverse roads God is recalling to Himself His erring ones, how rich are His resources, how manifold His wisdom, how subtle, how varied His appeals. Our limit to our own discipline is never to blind us to these many methods which God will adopt, modifying His own action to meet the endless diversities of this nature which God has made Himself so exuberant. Some methods are wrong, and, if they are, let us say so, but they are not wrong because they differ from ours; and differences and diversity of methods, far from exciting our disgust or distrust, ought to be a delight and proof to our souls of the freedom and fertility of God. The more we know of Him, the more shall we be on the look-out for surprises, for wonders, for strange liberty of action in His handling of men, the less shall we tie Him down to particular methods and rules, however precious they are to us in our spiritual growth. Only one thing we shall care about, that whatever the diversities of operation, it still shall be directed by the one Spirit, and bear witness to one Christ. One sure test of our love we shall always look out for, one sure sign we shall anxiously seek—the sign in our own souls of the love, of the width of love, for the more we know of God, the more love we shall have for our fellow-men. As we look out from within our own blessedness upon those outside, we shall love them more and more, and the further off they are now from God the more tenderly will our loving pity move out towards them; for if our faith be loyal and true, then the more deeply will it be penetrated within and without with that charity which ‘beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.’

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

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VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Promise. THE specific form of the whole gospel is promise, which
GAL. iii. 16. God gives in the Word, and causes to be preached. The last period of the world is the reign of grace (Rom. v. 21). Grace reigns in the Word, only as promise. Grace has nothing to do with law and requisition of law, therefore the word of that grace can be no other than a word of promise. For to this end Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant, that we might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. ix. 15). The promise of life in Christ Jesus is the word of the New Covenant (2 Tim. i. 1). The difference between the Gospel of the Old Covenant and that of the New rests alone on the transcendently greater glory of its promise (Heb. viii. 6; xi. whole). That these great and precious promises are given to us (2 Pet. i. 4; 2 Cor. vii. 1) establishes the position of a Christian man; if he calls himself a son and heir, he has no other title for this except that of promise alone, purely of grace (Gal. iv. 28; Rom. iv. 16). That, and how God, for His own sake blots out our transgressions, and remembers our sin no more (Isa. xliii. 25), is the substance of the word of promise in the New Testament, and which confirms that of the Old.

Promises and the Bible. THE Bible is a book of promises, as well as of revelations, or divine statements. These promises are our
GAL. iii. 16. heritage.

Faith in the promises makes the future present, and the heirship possession. It is thus, 'the substance of things hoped for.' Shall the promises fail? Is God unfaithful? Shall a Queen Elizabeth value her promise, as when she gave the first vacancy to one unfit? Shall a Chatham have a wall rebuilt, rather than seem to break a promise to his son? Shall a Napier refuse an invitation that he may keep a promise to a poor girl? And shall God refuse to honour drafts made on His promise in the name of His Son? Shall the promises fail? Is there inability or unwillingness to perform?

Promises and Payment. SATAN promises the best, but pays with the worst.

He promises honour, and pays with disgrace.

GAL. iii. 16. He promises pleasure, and pays with pain.

He promises profit, and pays with loss.

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He promises life, and pays with death.

But God pays as He promises; all His payments are made in pure gold.

Mediator. It was necessary that our Mediator should be both God
GAL. iii. 19-29. and Man, that He might take care of the interests both of the Creator and His creatures.

There are in the world that think it too great sauciness to be our own spokesman to God; and, therefore, go to S. Somebody, to prefer their petitions for them. I shall ever hold it good manners to go of my own errands to God. He that bids me come, will bid me welcome. God hath said, 'Come unto Me,' etc. It is no unmannerliness to come when I am called (S. Matt. xi. 28).

Merciful A TRAVELLER relates that, when passing through an
Severity. Austrian town, his attention was directed to a forest
GAL. iii. 16, etc. on a slope near the road, and he was told that death was the penalty of cutting down one of those trees. He was incredulous until he was further informed that they were the protection of the city, breaking the force of the descending avalanche which, without this natural barrier, would sweep over the homes of thousands. When a Russian army was there and began to cut away the fence for fuel, the inhabitants besought them to take their dwellings instead, which was done. Such he well thought are the sanctions of God's moral law. On the integrity and support of that law depends the safety of the universe. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' is a merciful proclamation. 'He that offends in one point is guilty of all,' is equally just and benevolent. To transgress once is to lay the axe at the foot of the tree which represents the security and peace of every loyal soul in the wide dominions of the Almighty.

A Christian, AN Austrian officer arrived one day in a town in Ger-
Neighbour. many celebrated for its baths. He seemed very near his
S. JOHN end, and, in consequence, he was refused admission at
ix. 23-30. several hotels, whose proprietors feared he would die on their hands. When he presented himself at the last hotel at which he could hope to get rooms, he received the same answer: there were none vacant.

A gentleman living in the hotel heard the landlord's answer, and noted the condition of the applicant. 'This officer is my near relation,' he said, stepping forward, 'and I shall share my room with him. He may have my bed and I can sleep on the sofa.' The landlord felt obliged to consent, and the invalid was carried to the room of his newly-found friend. When he had recovered strength

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enough to speak, he said: 'May I ask your name, my kind friend? How are you related to me?—on what side?'

'I am related to you,' was the reply, 'through our Lord Jesus Christ, for I have learned from Him that my neighbour is my brother.'

This stranger brother maintained the character he thus claimed. He nursed his guest tenderly, and carried to him with his own hand the first glass of medical water, and sought, while thus ministering to his body, to lead him to Jesus, the physician of the soul.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, GAL. V. 16-24.

GOSPEL, S. LUKE XVIII. 11-19.

FIRST MORNING LESSON, 2 KINGS IX.

FIRST EVENING LESSON, 2 KINGS X TO VER. 32 OR 2 KINGS XIII.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Where are the Nine?

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
S. LUKE xvii. 17.



IN order to do justice to the act of mercy which is recorded of our Lord in to-day's gospel, and to the subsequent conduct of the lepers, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the physical, of the religious, and of the social misery which leprosy involved. The leprosy of the Bible belonged to the class of skin-diseases which are especially provoked by the dry, hot atmosphere of Egypt and the East acting upon a large exposed surface of the human body. These diseases are aggravated, as of old in Egypt, when large numbers of men work together in kilns, or among dry and powdery substances, or when they are neglectful of personal cleanliness. The leprosy of the Bible is not, it would seem, the disease which goes by that name in modern Europe, and which is still not uncommon in Spain and in Norway. The two diseases may have been always dis-

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tinct; but, on the other hand, it is well known that, in the course of years, a disease will exhaust its type, disappear, and then reappear in a modified form. The leprosy of the Bible is what is now known as the Mosaic or white leprosy. Its symptoms are enumerated in the fifteenth of Leviticus. It was the leprosy of Miriam, of Naaman, of Gehazi, of King Uzziah. It was little better than a living death. Beginning on the surface of the body, it poisoned all the springs of life. One by one, the limbs of the sufferer decayed and fell away. The leper, in Scripture language, was 'as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh forth from his mother's womb.' This loathsome appearance, which must have inspired the patient and all around him with a sense of extreme humiliation and disgust, was aggravated, it is needless to say, by very considerable suffering. And, to crown all, no cure was possible, except by divine interposition. No skill of man in that age could cope with this foul disease. 'Am I a god?' exclaimed the King of Israel, on receiving the Syrian ambassadors on behalf of Naaman—'Am I a god, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?'

And leprosy was not merely physical misery. It had in Jewish eyes, and on divine authority, a religious significance. It was viewed, not so much as a punishment of sin, but as a symbol of the expression of sin's presence and triumph. Beyond other, or alone among, diseases, leprosy was the chosen symbol of moral defilement. It was a visible manifestation of sin. The spiritual eye of a wilful or degenerate race was too dull to discover the stain and wound which moral evil leaves upon a spiritual being; but a loathsome disease might inflict this lesson in moral truth upon man's sluggish or reluctant senses. From physical evil which man did see, he might learn something about moral evil which he did not see. And this leprosy was the outward sign of an inward curse. It was, so to put it, a sacrament of moral death; and, accordingly, the leper was bidden by the ancient law to bear about on him the emblems of the dead. His garments were rent, as if in mourning for his dead self. His head was bare, as was the wont of those who held converse with the dead. His lip was covered. He could only be legally cleansed with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet, as those who had been defiled by contact with a corpse.

To this physical and religious misery there was added another—a social one. The leper was banished from the companionship which might have soothed, if it could not cure, his pain. He was put out of the camp, or city, or village, which had been his home, even when the disease was not yet proved, and when the suspected mark might turn out to be purely innocent. A seclusion of seven days, and, under certain circumstances, of seven days more, from the communion

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of the confederate people, was sternly prescribed by the ancient law; and, when leprosy had been proved, influence and station, however exalted, could do nothing to avert or to mitigate the sentence. Miriam, the sister of the great lawgiver himself, was thrust without the camp. Uzziah, king though he was, must dwell in a separate house till the day of his death. And this was in part, no doubt, a sanitary precaution. Whether based upon popular apprehensions, or on an accurate estimate of the contagious nature of the disease, I do not now inquire. But it was much more due to the religious estimate of leprosy which was current in ancient Israel. The leper was a living emblem of that sin which no mere human healer can cure or expel, of that sin which excludes from the camp or city of God, that everlasting city into which, as we know, 'there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth.'

It was in our Lord's last journey towards Jerusalem, on the frontier of Galilee and Samaria, that He saw, on the road towards a village which is not named, ten lepers. They might not come near the gates, as being tainted with the fatal disease—as lying under the ban of God. They kept together in a band, endeavouring, no doubt, to find in each other's company some solace for their sufferings, for their sense of humiliation and disgust, for their exclusion—their forced exclusion—from the civil and religious life of their countrymen.

Misfortune makes strange associates, and of these lepers one was a Samaritan. Illness, too, will make men think of God who have never thought of Him before; and as our Lord passed along the way He drew the attention of these poor outcasts to Him. Conscious of their misery, they stood afar off, and yet, even if nothing came of it, they must appeal to Him. They might, it was possible, they might have heard that one of the distinctive features of His work among men was that the lepers were cleansed. They might have heard that He had commissioned His representatives not merely to heal the sick, but specifically to cleanse the lepers. They had no doubt an indistinct idea that He was, in some sense, the healer of mankind; and so, as He passed, they lifted up their voices in agony, and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.'

This prayer was in itself an act of faith; and, as such, our Lord at once tested it. There they were, all the ten, covered with leprosy, but He bade them do that which already implied that they were perfectly cleansed. They were to take a long journey, which would have been a waste of labour unless they could believe that He could make it worth their while to take it. 'Go,' He said, 'show yourselves to the priests.' To go to the priests for inspection unless they were healed would only have led to a repetition of their sentence as proved

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lepers ; and, therefore, after His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord had first healed a single leper, and then had sent him to undergo the prescribed inspection. Here it must have perplexed them sorely. Here He does nothing for them at the moment. He bids them go in their uncleanness as if they were already cleansed. Could they trust Him? That was the question. Could they trust Him sufficiently to make the venture, to obey when obedience for the moment seemed irrational, in firm persuasion that obedience would be justified by the event? Yes, they took Him at His word. They set out for Jerusalem, a distant journey along an unwelcome road : but, lo, as they went, and, as it would seem, before they could have gone far, a change was already upon them. They looked around, each one at the other, each at himself. They saw that an unseen power was there, cleansing them, they knew not how, of the foul disease, restoring to them the freshness and purity of their childish years. 'As they went they were cleansed.' It was in the act of obedience that they obtained the blessing. It was by assuming that our Lord could not fail that they found Him faithful.

They were all of them cleansed—all the ten ; but, like Naaman, the Syrian leper, returning with his blessing for the man of God, one of them thought that something was due to the author of so signal a deliverance. He left the others to pursue their onward course. He left them to claim, at the hands of the priests, their restoration to the civil and religious life of Israel. He left them : He could not do otherwise. He left them. He turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and then he threw himself at the feet of his deliverer to thank Him for this act of mercy and of power. And our Lord blessed him once more in another and a higher way. A greater possession far, than that even of freedom from leprosy, was assured to this poor Samaritan in the parting words, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' But ere He did this our Lord uttered the exclamation, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.'

He who knew what was in man, and who had already tasted so much of human ingratitude, could not have been surprised at the conduct of the nine lepers. But He calls attention to it as having, like His own merciful act itself, a typical value. The averages of gratitude and ingratitude among men do not vary much from age to age ; and what here took place on a small scale would reappear, He knew full well, again and again in the history of Christendom and of the world. Of Christians it is probably true at this moment, literally true, that about ten per cent. are grateful to God for His mercies in nature and in grace, and ninety per cent. are more or less conspicu-

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ously wanting in anything that can be properly termed gratitude. And if this, or anything like it, be the true state of the case, it is a fact which certainly deserves attentive consideration; for want of gratitude towards Jesus Christ on the part of a Christian seems, at first sight, quite inexplicable, for gratitude is a natural virtue. Man is capable of gratitude, even in some of its highest forms, without the grace of Christ at all. Plato could thank the gods that he was a man first, then a Greek, then an Athenian; last, that he had been born in the age of Socrates. Seneca could write to his benefactor: 'I know that I cannot adequately thank you, but I shall not cease to say that I cannot.' Not merely civilised, but barbarous, human nature is capable of the courtesies and of the self-sacrifice of true gratitude. Nay; there have been remarkable traces of it among the lower creatures. Every one has heard of the lion who refused to touch a Christian when the latter was exposed to the beasts in the amphitheatre, because he recognised the friend who had once tended his wound in the cavern of the desert. And for us Christians how overwhelming are the motives to gratitude! The number, the magnificence, the practical value of the blessings which we receive from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, conspire, with our sense of His love and His generosity, to make gratitude, one would think, strictly inevitable. And yet, as if anticipating what would be the real state of the case, Scripture insists, with great copiousness and fervour, upon what might have been, we should have thought, taken for granted. 'When ye have eaten and are full,' says Moses, 'ye shall bless the Lord your God.' 'What shall I render to the Lord,' says David, 'for all the benefits that He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord.' 'In everything give thanks,' says S. Paul, 'for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' 'Whatsoever, ye Colossians, do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.' 'Be careful, you Philippians, for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' 'Let the peace of God dwell in your hearts, and be ye thankful.' 'I exhort therefore that, first of all,' he writes to Timothy, 'supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.' These are but a few of the passages which might be quoted, and their number shows how much, in the mind and judgment of the Holy Spirit, such precepts would be needed in the days to come. Whether they are needed or not, is a question for your consciences and for mine, a question on which it does not seem necessary to enter at very great length.

I. Of the unthankfulness which so seriously depresses and blights

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our whole modern Christian life, one reason, in many cases, is that we do not see our great Benefactor. I do not forget that some of us may feel true gratitude to those human friends who have been kind to us in past years, and who are now out of sight. But take men in the mass, and it is quite otherwise. Little by little, as the years pass, too many of us forget the benefits that we owe to the dead. The pressure, the importunity, of the present and of the seen makes us overlook the great debt of thought and love which we owe to the past and the unseen. There is a cynical proverb—one of those proverbs in which our poor human nature passes such stern judgment upon itself—‘Out of sight, out of mind.’

In the miracle before us, you will remember, the lepers were still uncleansed when they left our Lord that, in obedience to His command, they might show themselves to the priests. When the miracle was wrought upon them, the worker was out of sight. He would have walked on towards the village; and they, avoiding the village in obedience to the law, were pursuing their way towards Jerusalem. Yes, at that moment of awe and blessing they did not see Him. No shadowy form hovered around them to remind them that He was present in power to bless and heal them. No word like the ‘I will: be thou clean,’ which had healed the leper at Capernaum two years before, now fell upon their ears. No hand was raised over them in felt benediction; and yet, minute by minute, the foul disease upon them was disappearing: when, or how, they could not exactly tell; and, at last, they saw—they could not doubt it, they saw that they were healed, but the healer Himself they did not see. As now in His Church, so then He was out of sight, even when His action was most felt and energetic. His words still lingered in their ears; but it was not impossible, amid the distractions of a new scene, to forget their import; and thus, out of the ten men, nine actually did forget it.

Now what is this but a sample of what passes in our daily life? Numbers who are here know what it is to have recovered from illness, perhaps very serious illness. God, by His providence, has directed us to use means which might assist—which could not ensure—recovery. We have recovered, and now we proceed to account for our recovery. ‘It was a good constitution,’ we say, ‘that carried us through’; or, ‘It was a skilful change of treatment just at the crisis of the illness’; or, ‘It was a change in the weather’; or, ‘It was a change of air.’ Now, if this were not intended to be a complete account of the matter—if it was remembered that weather, clime, medical skill, strength of constitution, are all instruments in the hands of a supreme agent, and that, ever mindful of His agency, we are merely describing the particular instrument which He has selected

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to carry out His purpose, then no harm would be done, but do we not too often stop short at the secondary or immediate cause of our recovery, and altogether forget the first cause? We see the secondary cause: the first, or real, cause we do not see, and we are so largely the slaves of sense that the horizon of our view becomes the measure of our gratitude. Alas! how do we thus turn God's loving generosity against Himself. Unlike those vulgar benefactors who insist upon being recognised while they dispense their bounties, God, generally speaking, hides His hand. He acts through laws which seem to operate spontaneously. He acts through agents who are, at the moment, perfectly free and self-determining. He conceals Himself behind the vast processes of nature, behind the slow movements of history, behind the clouds of heaven, till, at last, we conceive of the world, of the universe, as going on without Him—without Him, its sole author, its absolute Lord. His generous self-concealment is taken for a forced inactivity, and, of those who still believe Him to have been the author of all that is not Himself, too many think of Him as men now-a-days think of those old builders of schools and colleges, who have left their great foundations to later ages, and are powerless to exert any control over their handiwork. Thus God's very generosity only provokes our thanklessness. He keeps out of sight, and we take it for granted that He would show Himself if He could, that His agency is only invisible because it is shadowy or unreal. Oh, singular perversity of our fallen nature, which is thus bound down and enslaved in its captivity to sense that we forget God our Saviour, chiefly because He is too loving to overwhelm us at once with the sense of what we owe to Him!

II. And a second cause of unthankfulness is our imperfect appreciation of God's gifts. No doubt, while the nine lepers were covered with their foul disease, placed under a social and religious ban, excluded from the society of their countrymen, they would have thought that no blessing in life could possibly compare with that of being cured of leprosy. But what did they think after the cure had been wrought? Too probably, something like this, that health was no such peculiar blessing after all, since health, when they looked around, was shared by multitudes. In being free from leprosy they were, after all, only like the great majority of their countrymen. Why should they become enthusiastic over a condition of things which was not the exception, but the rule? And is not this the temper of many Christians nowadays? We are not—I admit it,—we are not incapable of gratitude. We can rouse ourselves to acknowledge signal and extraordinary blessings. The one survivor from a wreck, or in a railway catastrophe, can still say, 'Thank God!' with unaffected sincerity. But why should he thank God for benefits which he shares with all the

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world?—for existence, for preservation, for life, for food, for strength, for the use of reason, for friends, for home, and the like? He does not say that he ought not to be thankful for these things: he secretly thinks to himself that his gratitude will be somehow vulgarised if it is lavished upon these every-day gifts. Had God given less, or had He given what He gives less indiscriminately, He would, it appears, have been thanked more warmly and more frequently than He is.

And this same feeling is sometimes applied even to the blessings of grace and redemption. All our lives we have heard of God's 'inestimable love in the redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ,' of 'the means of grace,' and of 'the hope of glory' beyond this world. We think so little of it, it may be, because this blessing is in its scope so vast and so inclusive. If the Eternal Son of God had redeemed us and none others; if, instead of willing all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, He had made a very select few, ourselves among the rest, objects of His exceptional love, then, we think, it had been otherwise; but when His love is as diffused as the rays of the sun in heaven; when He opens His arms upon the Cross to all the families of mankind, and bids any who will to drink of the water of life freely, men ask, 'Why should we individually dissolve into ecstasies of gratitude in acknowledgment of blessings which are the portion, confessedly, of countless multitudes?'

This estimate of a blessing which takes little account of it, unless it be a rarity, like hot-house fruit or flowers in mid-winter, or in the early spring, is not really due to a high ideal of excellence which will see the great only in the unwonted. Its true source is that dulness, that harshness, of spiritual perception, which health and prosperity too often inflict upon the soul. We cannot see clearly through the thick film which has thus been formed over the spiritual eye. If we did, how impossible would it be to forget that God could not, without being untrue to His own glorious perfections, mete out His love and sympathy in the narrow measure which, it seems, would earn our gratitude! If we did see, we should own, with full and thankful hearts, that love is love, blessings are blessings, salvation is salvation, whether we share them with the many or with the few. The deliverance of the lepers was not the less signal because the health to which they were restored was the portion of the great majority of their countrymen; nor was their gratitude less due because, in another form, it was due from thousands of Israelites.

III. And a third reason in many minds against cultivating and expressing thankfulness to God—men do not mention it—is the utilitarian one. Men do not see—if they said out what they think

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—do not see the good of thankfulness. The value of prayer, of course, in Christian eyes is plain enough. Christians believe that certain blessings are to be obtained from God by the instrumentality of prayer; and not to pray is to forfeit the blessings which prayer obtains. 'But thankfulness,' men say to themselves, 'what does it win for us that is not already ours without it? Man already enjoys that for which he gives thanks, and God surely does not want our thanks as if they were a sort of equivalent for His bounty. He blesses us out of the joy of doing so; and whether we thank Him or not must be of small concern to such a being as He is.' Certainly, God does not expect to be repaid for His benevolence by any equivalent in the way of thanksgiving that you or I can possibly offer Him. And yet He will have us thank Him, not for His own sake, but for ours. He, enthroned in His uncreated perfections, He loses—can lose—nothing, though we, to our loss, should forget Him altogether. But we cannot be wanting to the great duty of thankfulness without being untrue to the very fundamental law of our existence, without the worst results upon ourselves. For what is thankfulness, such as God demands? What is it but that which is at the bottom of all real human excellence—the frank acknowledgment of truth? Just as prayer is the recognition of our dependence upon God amid the darkness and uncertainties of the future, so thankfulness is the recognition of our indebtedness to God for the blessings of the past. And to acknowledge truth like this is always moral strength: to refuse to acknowledge truth like this is always moral weakness. Accordingly, the worst excesses of the heathen world are traced by S. Paul up to the ingratitude of the Gentile nations for the light of nature and of conscience. 'When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' And, in the same strain, all the later apostasy and misery of Israel is referred, in the prophetic song of Moses, to the original vice of forgetting what God had done for that favoured people. 'God had found Israel,' says the lawgiver, 'in a desert and in the waste howling wilderness. He led him about; He instructed him; He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.' But, then, after all, looking across the centuries, Moses thus addresses the degenerate race: 'Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.' And then he

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utters, in the divine name, the prophetic sentence, 'And He said, I will hide My face from them. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.' And then He adds, in yearning love, 'Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!'

And this law is not the less true of individual Christians and of Christendom. Nations, churches, men, who forget their one great Benefactor, are in a sure way to ruin, temporally and eternally. God cannot be forgotten with impunity. Thankfulness, like the rivers which flow into the ocean, and which are again replenished from it—thankfulness is the source of new blessings to the soul. Only in thankful hearts is the Christian life securely maintained, and to that life it contributes three important results.

1. It first of all stimulates us most powerfully to active well-doing. A man will do out of gratitude more, much more, than he will do out of fear or out of hope of reward. Thankfulness for redemption was the motive power of a life like that of S. Paul, as it has been the motive power of all the greatest and most fruitful lives that have been lived in Christendom. 'He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again'—this is the motto of all such lives. Gratitude, like love, lives not in words, but in deed and in truth. Often those who feel most what has been done for them say least about it; but they do most. Gratitude can work; gratitude can suffer; gratitude can persevere; but one thing gratitude, for the inestimable love of God in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ—one thing gratitude cannot do: it cannot bring itself to feel that it has done enough. It cannot in this world lie down with a sense that it has really paid off its debt to the Redeemer.

2. And, again, gratitude makes worship, especially public worship, real, serious, reverent. Praise is the very soul of the Church's worship, and praise is the voice of thankfulness. The first object, we are told twice every day, which makes us Christians assemble and meet together, is that they may render thanks for the great benefits which they have received at the hands of God. And these thanks are expressed in the greater number of the Psalms, in the hymns, in the canticles, in the *Te Deum* beyond, perhaps, other hymns—(who but the thankful can possibly understand such a psalm as that?),—above all, in the Holy Sacrament, on that very account named by the first Christians the Eucharist, wherein, to use the words of our Prayer Book, 'we entirely desire God's fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.' It has been said that our public worship would be much less unworthy of Him to whom it is addressed if, before beginning, each Christian would think exactly

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what he most needs to obtain by prayer at the hands of God. It may be said, with at least equal truth, that this improvement, so much to be desired, would be secured if we all of us had more of the spirit of the one leper in the gospel, and less of the spirit of the nine; if each act of worship could be a conscious turning back on the road of life, to fall at the Redeemer's feet and give Him thanks for the incalculable blessings of pardon and of grace which those who know anything about Him—anything about themselves—know that He, and He alone, has won for them.

3. And, lastly, thankfulness here on earth is the best possible preparation for the spirit and for the life of heaven. Heaven is the home of thankful souls. The occupations of heaven would be misery to those who feel not gratitude. 'Blessing, and honour, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and power, and glory, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.' 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' How shall we sing those songs, or any of the songs of the redeemed, hereafter, if here and now we do not learn their spirit? If the habits which are being formed by us in this life will be carried by each of us into the eternal world, how earnestly should we pray God to give us that 'due sense of all His mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth His praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving ourselves to His service,' to whom, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, power, might, majesty, and dominion, henceforth and for ever!

H. P. LIDDON.

Who is my Neighbour?

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

S. LUKE x. 29.

BY these words the lawyer in to-day's gospel intended to put our Lord, if he could, into a difficulty. He had begun by inquiring, in the catechetical fashion of the Jewish schools, what a man had to do in order to inherit eternal life; and he probably expected to be answered in such terms as would enable him to employ his learning and his logic before a public audience in making a damaging rejoinder. Our Lord, in reply, referred him back to his knowledge of the Mosaic law. 'What is written in the law? How readest thou?' Our Lord would have the lawyer answer his own question, and he did so in the simplest and most authoritative language of the ancient Scriptures, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy

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God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Plainly, this was enough to close the discussion. Our Lord simply approved. 'Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.' But such a conclusion as this was not at all what the lawyer had wanted. His object was not to be approved of by our Saviour by making a reply which any Jewish child could have made just as well. Still less was it his object to commit himself thus in public to an exacting measure of duty. He had wished on a public occasion to put the Great Teacher, who was taking so many hearts captive around him, into an obvious difficulty; and, when this proved impossible, he felt that some apology was needed to account for his ever having asked the question which he had just answered himself, and answered so well. 'But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?' The answer of the lawyer seemed simple enough, so he would imply, but there is just one term in it which is suggestive of most embarrassing ambiguity. What is the word neighbour meant to refer to? Does it mean the man in the next street? Does it mean a fellow-townsmen, or a countryman, or a co-religionist? Does it represent an accidental or a permanent relation? Is it a technical expression altogether, or has it a popular sense and range? 'Until this point is settled'—so the lawyer would suggest—'nothing is settled.' This vague, inclusive, indeterminate word may mean anything or nothing, and the original question—what a good Jew ought to do in order to inherit eternal life—is just as much unanswered as ever. This was the lawyer's reason for asking the second question. 'He, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?'

Now, our Lord answered this question, not by a definition, but by a narrative. A definition, we all know, may be much more exact than a narrative, but a narrative is often much more instructive than a definition. A definition addresses itself to the understanding; a narrative, generally at least, speaks to the heart. Had our Lord defined the word neighbour, the lawyer would, probably, have challenged the definition. He would have felt his credit as a disputant at stake. He would have felt, moreover, that he was dealing with an ordinary rabbi. But when he had answered our Lord's closing question—'Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?'—the lawyer was silent. That story of the Good Samaritan was, to such a man, nothing less than a moral revelation. It showed the lawyer that he stood there face to face with a master of the human heart.

The story of the Good Samaritan is, probably, the best known of our Lord's parables, and there is much to be said for the opinion

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that it is a narrative of an event which had actually occurred not long before; for the road between Jerusalem and Jericho had, in those days, a bad name: it was infested by highwaymen. On the other hand, it was constantly traversed by Jewish priests and Levites, who lived in great numbers in the town of Jericho, and who had to be often at Jerusalem in order to take their turns in the weekly service of the Temple. Thus, such an occurrence as that related by our Lord was antecedently probable. A Jewish traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho falls into the hands of the banditti, who take his clothes from him, and leave him wounded and half dead in the public road. So it happened that soon after a priest passes along the road, sees what has occurred, and thinking, probably, that nothing could be done, and that that part of the road was unsafe for travellers, hurries on. Then comes a Levite who seems to have taken a closer view of the wounded man. He, too, probably reflecting that the priest's example was a very good sanction for doing nothing, passes on his road. And then there comes a traveller of a race and of a religion that cannot often have ventured into that neighbourhood. A Samaritan, travelling on affairs of business, rides close to the wounded man. It is clear to him what has happened. Though his journey is one of pressing importance (so it is implied) he, nevertheless, dismounts. He is full of compassion for the past: he is ready with remedies needed at the moment: he makes provision for the future. He bends over the wounded man, and, drawing out the small flasks of wine and oil which Eastern travellers then generally carried, uses the oil to relieve the pain, and the wine (such was the practice of those days) to stop the bleeding. He binds up the wounds of the fainting man: he places him on the animal which he had himself been riding: he takes him to the nearest public inn, where he pays for his immediate bill of fare, and promises to discharge his remaining expenses when the cure is completed.

There are many and important lessons to be drawn from this parable. It shows how easy it is for us men of the sanctuary to be far less tender-hearted than laymen who pass their lives in matters which have nothing to do, for the most part, with the things of God. It shows how easily the religious conscience, so termed, may reason itself out of any sense of obligation to perform simple, primary, human duties. It gives us a rich and instructive lesson in the practical character of genuine philanthropy, and, behind the immediate interests and personages of the narrative, it shadows out, not indistinctly, the Divine and Eternal Charity taking compassion, in the fulness of the centuries, upon the wounds of suffering humanity, and placing redeemed man in the holy home of souls till the end of time.

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But we must turn aside from these points to consider the one point which answers the lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour?'

And this question of the lawyer's is answered by a counter-question which is put by our Lord. The lawyer had asked, 'Who is my neighbour?' Our Lord, at the conclusion of His narrative, asks, 'Which of the three—priest, Levite, Samaritan—was neighbour to the wounded man?' The lawyer meant, 'Who has a just claim on my time, my affections, my purse?' Our Lord asks, 'Who feels that his time, his purse, his compassion, are due to others?' Observe, our Lord does not ask, 'Was it priest, Levite, or Samaritan, that thought the wounded man his neighbour?' He does ask, 'Was it priest, Levite, or Samaritan, that was neighbour to the wounded man?' And the word neighbour, He thus implies, involves reciprocal relationship. In order to find out what it means, a man ought to put himself in the place of another man, with the question, 'Ought this man to help me, I being in what is now his place, and he being in mine?' This is the practical meaning of the 'as thyself.' Human self-love is to be the measure of Christian charity, and thus the neighbour of the parable is not, as we might have expected, the wounded Jew. The neighbour of the parable is the Samaritan who aided him—the Samaritan who sees in the wounded Jew only a wounded man, and who feels that had he been the wounded man the Jew ought to have helped him,—would have helped him too.

A Samaritan! What a neighbour to a Jewish imagination! He was a living outrage on all that a Jew revered and loved. Did not pagan blood flow in his veins? Was it not widely believed, and, apparently, on credible grounds, that he still worshipped the idols of his forefathers that were buried beneath the tree at Shechem? What was his strange version of the holy law, but the legacy of an apostate? What was his temple at Gerizim but a symbol of religious rebellion? A Samaritan—was not his name cursed publicly in the service of the synagogue? Was it not pronounced in private life only as the bitterest and coarsest reproaches—only as the synonym for having a devil? Was not his witness refused as worthless in any Jewish court? Was he not debarred, as heathens were not debarred, from becoming, if he would, a proselyte? A Samaritan, indeed! How could it be that a name which recalled seven centuries of suspicion and hatred—that a name which implied separation of race, of political sympathy, of religious conviction—that a name which roused in the Jewish heart a fiercer anger, by far, than that of the pagan races who had robbed Israel of his wealth and of his liberty,—how could it be that such a name should be proposed to Jews as the type and the symbol of human brotherhood? For intensity and

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venom, none of the great historical animosities could compare with this between Jew and Samaritan, and, therefore, when our Lord put the question to the lawyer, 'Which was the true neighbour?' the lawyer could not bring himself to pronounce the execrated name: he could only say quietly that the true neighbour was he that had showed mercy to the wounded man. Our Lord had, in fact, chosen an instance which would prove in the clearest terms to the Jewish mind that this law of neighbourly duty has no frontier whatever within the human family—that it spans the range of humanity.

And here it may be well to ask on what grounds this teaching really rests. Why is it more than a Utopian aspiration, than an impracticable sentiment? Why are we bound to keep it before us, to throw it into the form of practical precept, to cherish it with the reverence which is due to a moral conviction? Once more, on what does it depend?

I. And the answer is, first, that it depends on a natural fact, the fact that we men all have common parents, that, however widely removed from each other, we are all really relations, that we constitute one great and ancient family. This natural fact is taught in the Bible which describes the original creation, you will remember, not of one among several pairs of human beings, but of that one pair from which all other human beings have sprung. This natural fact is asserted by the great Apostle at Athens, when he would recall a clever but volatile people to a deeper sense of the seriousness of life. 'God,' he says, 'has made of one blood all the nations of the earth.' Doubtless, the unity of our own race has been disputed in modern days, but it is asserted with at least equal determination; and, until the scientific world is of one mind upon the subject, we Christians may continue to believe our Bibles, especially in a matter like this, of distinctly religious importance. It is, indeed, sometimes said that what is really essential in Christianity does not depend upon speculative doctrines or opinions like this. Men draw what they think a clear and deep distinction between their theology and their religion. But, in fact, the connection between belief and practice is much more intimate than such persons suspect. In some cases every man can trace the connection. In others it is less immediately apparent, but not, on that account, the less real. Just let us suppose that it were really held to be certain that, instead of being descended from a single pair, the human race was of hybrid origin, made up of the confusion of a great many distinct races—I will not say of men, but of creatures approximating, more or less nearly, to the human type. What would become of the moral ideas which assume that humanity is a great organic whole? What would become of the sympathies, of the duties, of the aspirations, which

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befit us men as consciously members of a common race? It may be said that these common human interests would remain intact, however we might account, speculatively, for the origin of the human race, however we might determine its relations to the races around. But is this really the case? Would it really be possible to endeavour to cherish and practise love, respect, community of feeling, if, at every turn, we were haunted by the question how far this or that apparent human being really shared our nature at all, and did not rather belong to some race of creatures which had little in common with our own beyond a certain similarity of outward form? What is it which imports such moral horror into the ideas of murder and cannibalism, but the conviction that we human beings are really members of one family, and have the same blood flowing in our veins? Destroy this conviction, and it will be difficult to prove either that what we now deem human rights ought to be respected, or else that they ought not to be very largely extended. If the frontier of the human race be as indefinite as is sometimes suggested, it is not easy, I submit, to understand upon what principles of morality or justice some, at any rate, of the more intelligent prisoners who are now caged up in our public gardens are still detained there, or why they are denied some sort of secular education, or deemed incapable of holding property or of voting for the representatives of the people. Why, in short, are they not, in view of some recent theories, just as truly our neighbours as the wounded man on the road to Jericho, or as the Samaritan who aided him? Why must we hesitate to admit that our existing estimate of their claims upon our charity is not altogether neighbourly? No, a paradox in the long-run is its own best corrective. Whatever we may say in moments of speculative delirium, we all of us do, practically, act upon the belief that mankind forms a single race, with a sharply defined frontier separating it from all other races whatever. We act upon the supposition that this fact is the ground of those many and exacting duties which we owe to one another.

No less is this fact the basis of all that Christianity teaches us about our need of a Redeemer, and about His relation to our kind. Read the last ten verses of the fifth chapter of S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and you will see what I mean. The whole of the argument supposes mankind to be descended from a single father, whose one fatal act of disobedience compromised us all. If the human race has, not one, but several ancestors, then its moral condition might possibly be something very unlike that which S. Paul supposes. Then our relations to the great Restorer would, as certainly, become very doubtful indeed.

II. And this brings me to the second ground of the point before us

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—of this widened and generous idea of my neighbour which is enjoined by the parable.

And it depends, secondly, on the high honour put upon our race by our Lord Jesus Christ. He took our nature upon Him. Before his Incarnation the idea of humanity had been well-nigh lost. The most cultivated peoples of the ancient world spoke of all others than themselves as barbarians, and treated them with corresponding contempt. The most religious people of antiquity spoke of all outside the natural pale as Gentiles, and, when they could not despise, hated them unreservedly. In his fallen state, man looks upon his brother man as his natural enemy. Before the Incarnation the idea of humanity seemed to have disappeared as truly as if mankind had never really been one family, and were only an agglomeration of similarly formed creatures after all. And not the least part of our Lord's great work for us men was to restore the idea of what we really are, and of our true relationship to each other; and He did this partly by such precepts as 'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you'; 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Such precepts imply an estimate of man altogether different from that which passed current in the world of that day. But He did much more than this to restore the true idea of humanity, by taking our nature upon Himself. What was this poor frail humanity, that the Eternal and All-holy should fold it around His being and make it His own? What was it that He should, as His Apostle proclaims, in the fulness of His condescension, pass by the orders of the angelic hierarchy, and should appear as a human Child in the cradle of Bethlehem, and as a human sufferer on the Cross of Calvary? Something, assuredly, it was, and is, distinct from any race of creatures around, something so beautiful in its ruins, so noble in its very degradation, that as He is in the supper-room He, the Lord of all, must gird Himself to kneel at their feet, and pour on them, soiled as they were with the dust of ages, the water of His divine hospitality, that, as on the Cross, He, the perfect moral being, must be made sin for it and shed His life-blood for a sufferer whom no less costly remedy would have availed to save.

It is not necessary, to say more, but henceforth, in Christian eyes, humanity must be ennobled. Henceforth, as in the body of Christ, so elsewhere, there is for Christians neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, male nor female, bond nor free. Henceforth, the suffering are the aristocracy of humanity in Christian eyes; and Christians obey their Lord when they see in the hungry, in the thirsty, in the homeless, in the naked, in the sick, in the captive, not other human beings, but Himself.

H. P. LIDDON.

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II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Credentials of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. GALATIANS V. 22, 23.



PAUL has just been recounting what he calls the 'works of the flesh.' It is an ugly and a hateful list, and lacks only one item to make it just twice as long as the contrasted catalogue which fills our text with melody. There is great power in this method of showing up opposite kinds of life. Take the two tallies by triplets, and judge:

'Hatred, variance, emulations,'

'Love, joy, peace;'

'Wrath, strife, seditions,'

'Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness;'

'Envyings, murders, drunkenness,'

'Faith, meekness, temperance.'

What a suggestive trilogy it is! The very statement is an argument. We have but to look to be convinced. What man with his eyes open would undertake the works when he might have the fruit? This very use of words throws a flood of light upon the nature of the choice: the *works* of the flesh, he says, and the *fruit* of the Spirit. Sin is a hard task-master, and the slaves of sin must toil. God, on the other hand, is a gracious householder, and to those who own His Fatherhood He gives the freedom of the heavenly garden, which is full of fruit. The one sort of existence is a perpetual thralldom, with death as the final wage; the other is sheltered and shadowed by the tree of life, the boughs of which are golden with their precious yield. The treadmill and the orchard—is it possible for any one to hesitate about his choice? Are you meaning to let yourself be worked to death by sin, when there is this possibility of being nourished unto eternal life and made sharer of an everlasting felicity? But this point, important though it be, is not the one which I especially desire to emphasise just now.

I. Our text tells us what these things of the Spirit are, and I bid you take notice that they all of them, without exception, come under the head of what we know as Christian character. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and the rest; when you find these in a life be assured that back of them lies the Holy Ghost. They are the credentials of

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the Spirit. I am the more anxious to insist upon this criterion of spirituality, because nowadays there is so much confusion of thought with respect to the whole subject. A great many people are misled by the false inference that because the spiritual is invisible therefore whatever is invisible must be in some sense spiritual; and that if they individually are giving close attention to things unseen they are, by the very act, showing themselves devoted to the things of the Spirit. This is not only a fallacy, it is a harmful fallacy, and harmful moreover to those natures that are of the better type, for to take an interest in things unseen certainly marks an advance upon the state of mind in which only solids and surfaces attract one. I cannot think, therefore, that we shall be misemploying precious time if we bend our thoughts for a little while towards this question of spirituality, what it is, and what it is not. Bear in mind all the while what I said just now, that only those things ought to be called the things of the Spirit that can be worked up into character, or, to borrow a scientific phrase, expressed in terms of character. Heat, electricity, and motion are, as we say, convertible one into another. Wherever we have heat, there we have possible electricity, and possible motion. Now, my point is that whatever lays claim to being reckoned among the things of the Spirit must substantiate that claim by showing itself capable of being converted into character. It is not enough for it to show that it is convertible into something non-material, or that it stands related somehow to the unseen universe; more than this, it must establish kinship with the essential manhood and the essential womanhood, it must take hold of human conduct.

Let me give some instances of forms of the invisible that are sometimes mistaken for and confounded with the spiritual. This will help to bring our subject within the confines of daily life and common experience, and make us feel sure that we are chasing a real and not a phantom enemy of our peace. Perhaps the crudest of all the misconceptions in this line is that which confuses the physical forces of the world we live in with the things of the Spirit. Ever so many people, some of them highly intelligent people, are standing aloof from the religion of Jesus Christ to-day with the vague expectation in their minds that if they will only be patient a little longer, the students of nature, the experts in chemistry, physics, and biology will furnish them with a new religion founded upon demonstrable facts, such facts as may be observed by instruments of precision, and tabulated by approved scientific methods. In other words, they are awaiting a day when it shall no longer be thought necessary to live by creed or belief, and when it shall have become possible to live by exact scientific formula instead, certainty having been substituted for faith. There are unworthy motives that lead some men to take up

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this attitude, but upon these I shall not dwell. Let me speak rather of what seems at first sight reasonable considerations. One of these is the greater intimacy with the world of invisible powers and non-material agencies which modern discovery has forced upon us. We live (the religious and the non-religious alike) we all live ever so much closer to the realm of things unseen than we used to live. Electricity is not only adding marvellously to the convenience of living, but it is introducing all mankind to a tract of religion of existence with which until recently only a few advanced students were even distantly acquainted. The little children of to-day are taking as matters of course truths at the first disclosure of which our elder generation stood awestruck. They roam about at will over fields at the very edge of which we read, not so very long ago, the words 'No thoroughfare.' Nay, more than that, the very horizon itself is on the move, and pushes itself further and further from us as the days unfold, so that there seems to be no limit to the reach of our excursions into the unseen world that everywhere lies at back of the world seen. This fact of itself is enough to upset an unsteady mind, and to send excitable imaginations wool-gathering. 'Surely,' they say to themselves, 'religion must lie this way somewhere, and if we wait a while it will embody itself out here in the spaces of the invisible, in such fashion as to leave us in no manner of doubt as to how we ought to live and how we ought to worship, if in fact we need worship at all.' To be sure, the chariot wheels of the new day seem for some unaccountable reason to tarry, but we feel confident that the ears listening in this direction will be the first to hear the rattle of their approach. Must it not be that purely scientific ethics are just waiting to be born?

II. And then, besides this confidence inspired by our larger acquaintance with the out-of-sight region in which nature's forces have their play, there is the further feeling, that in days like these when people know so much that never before was known, asking them to believe is an impertinence. Who cares for hearsay when he can have demonstration? Who would any longer walk by faith when at last it has become possible for him to walk by sight? To all of which the sufficient answer is that religion deals not with relations between things, but with relations between persons, and that its central word is Duty. What do I owe God? What do I owe my fellow-man? These are the questions of religion, and no amount of acquaintance with the secrets of nature, no supposable enlargement of our knowledge of our agencies advances us in this direction by so much as a single inch. Natural science can do marvellous things. She can catalogue the stars, she can weigh the sun, she can analyse the ray of light that has been travelling earthwards for a thousand years;

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but she cannot rule a state, or discipline a family, or mould a saint; for the moment we touch morals and religion we find that personality is the principal thing, and personality is something which neither telescope nor spectroscope can read. Drive a stake down here, therefore, and fasten to it the words, 'The physical, even though invisible, must not be confounded with the spiritual. It belongs to another order.'

III. But what about the metaphysical, what about that region of man's life over which pure intellect holds sway, the wide domain of the understanding, philosophy—can we find the things of the Spirit there? Very many are persuaded that we can. They have the sense to perceive and to acknowledge that it is absurd to seek answers for the soul's questions and comfort for the soul's sorrows out in the chilly stellar spaces, or under the hard lens of the microscope, and yet equally averse are they to confessing that there is any call for them either to search the Scriptures or to hear the Church. 'Let us think it out,' they say, 'as best we can. It must be that man has within himself all that is essential to his well-being. Why acknowledge in this matter any dependence on the past? Why look backwards to the prophets, or Apostles, or even to the one called the Christ? Our own minds supply the raw material of religion, let us work it up for ourselves.' This, or something like this, I take it, is what has lain behind all the theosophies, so-called, that from time to time have made their appearance and found followings. The notion seems to be that by thinking out some theory of deity, gathering up and piecing together what men have at any time thought or said about God, we in the very process become spiritual, make ourselves religious. We cannot thus think ourselves into the Kingdom of Heaven. No doubt the understanding plays an important part in religion. Without a certain measure of intelligence it is impossible to apprehend the things of the Spirit. But to suppose that by intelligence alone we can work ourselves into right relations with God and man, which is the object of religion, is much the same thing as saying that because intelligence is essential to good soldiership, therefore to be intelligent is to be soldierlike. No, there is something to be added to intelligence, namely, courage, before we can have the soldier, and so also must the things of the mind be supplemented by the things of the Spirit before we can have the saint. Keeness is not enough, we must have goodness. Have you never known people who could argue questions of religion by the hour together, discuss points of theology all day long, but who yet did not strike you as being in any perceptible measure spiritually-minded? The human intellect is in many important respects like a machine, and once started works automatically. It is doubtless,

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more worthily employed when engaged with some subjects than when engaged with others, just as a loom may be said to be more worthily employed when weaving a piece of tapestry than when the shuttles are flying to and fro between the threads of some homelier fabric, but all the while, in both cases, the mechanical movement is one and the same. Theological argumentation is just as human as any other kind of argumentation. It deals with the highest of all subjects, to be sure, but the law of its method is as fixed as the law of evidence, as mechanical as the law of the tides. Theologue, theist or theosophist, it matters not, whoever rests his hope of finding God and living at peace with Him upon the fine quality of his intelligence, is doomed to disappointment. The best peace of all is the kind that passes understanding, but it is not reached that way. So then, drive a second stake here and hang on it the words, 'The intellectual is not necessarily the spiritual.'

Again there is, as there has always been, a considerable number of people who make a religious merit of wandering about in the weird and shadowy region that lies along the boundary of human life, and hedges it with mystery. I refer to that debateable ground, where the skirmish-lines of two armies meet, and which in general may be said to be bounded on the south by sanity, and on the north by madness. It is the favourite rendezvous of all that is abnormal, preternatural, and morbid. Hither the hypnotists resort, and the dabblers in whatever is occult, the mediums and the mind-readers, and all their kin. Observe, I do not say that it is a region that ought not to be explored; swamps are all the better for being cleared and drained, even though the clearing and the draining sometimes cost us valuable lives. By all means let us have as much 'psychical research' as may be necessary, only pray do not let us be cajoled into the notion that this sort of thing can by any sort of possibility do duty as religion. There is nothing religious about it. To pretend that there is, is the worst sort of charlatanry. As investigation it is curious and often, no doubt, fascinating, but to mistake it for religion is like mistaking pathology for hygiene, the study of the laws of disease for the practice of the laws of health. Here, then, drive a third stake and hang on it this judgment, 'The weird and the occult are not the spiritual.'

How it will refresh us now to turn back to the clear, bracing, wholesome atmosphere of our text, and how grateful we ought to be to God that there is such a resort. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Really, we feel as if we were back among friends, do we not? What a simple criterion of the Spirit's presence it is, and yet how deep, how searching! The trouble with the other methods

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of becoming spiritual, or rather one trouble with them, is that they presuppose exceptional capacity, unusual gifts and powers. But there is not a man or woman or child for whom such spirituality as our text pictures is not within reach. These gracious guests are waiting to come in at the doorway of our soul this very day if only you will let them. You have not to make yourself a scientific expert, or an intellectual giant, or a mystical adept, in order to call them yours. All you have to do is to let God pour them into your heart. When shall we ever learn that the best things come in the simplest ways, and are to be had for the asking? Who are the people who help to make your life endurable, who redeem the three-score years and ten from the reproach of being an arid and cheerless waste; are they not those who have in them and who shed about them in freest abundance, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and the rest? Surely when you come to count it up, it is very little that your famous friends, if you happen to have any, have done for you, or your accomplished friends, or your brilliant friends; the people who have really helped you have been those whose spiritual features you, at this moment, see looking at you from this gracious text of ours. Can you and I pray any better to-day than that He from whom all good gifts do come may ripen in our daily lives this blessed fruit, manifold in its variety, yet one in the source and secret of its virtue.

W. R. HUNTINGTON.

The Conflict with Sin.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
GALATIANS V. 17.

THE great conflict with sin comes after the pardon of sin. But there is this difference between the battle before, and the battle after, we have really received the grace of God; before, sin was in the ascendant, and good feelings had the lower ground! 'Sin reigned,' and the best that a man could say of himself was, that sometimes his religion rose up, and resisted, and perhaps even overcame the dominant sin. Now, it is 'grace' that reigns: the sin is a rebellious province—very strong, very powerful, and often even superior to the sovereignty of the higher influence. Nevertheless, the throne in the heart is God's—the evil is a faction—a tremendous faction—but still, only a faction in another's empire.

This was S. Paul's conflict, and David's—sin in violent antagonism to the established and recognised authority of God. This, and this

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only, is a Christian's warfare. We have not now to do with any other.

I. Whoever knows anything of the nature of his own heart would expect that the presence and the claim of good would immediately stir up the opposition and the virulence of evil. The fact is, that until there is some good, there can be no conflict at all. It is all—if it is not an abuse of the word to use it—it is all peace, too much peace, a fatal harmony, the devil's unity. If there be any one who has such peace that he has no conflict in his own heart, I tremble for that man. The work of grace has not yet begun in that man. A man who has lived all his life in darkness would not know that it was darkness. To be distressed by darkness he must have seen light. If you would calculate the horror of that night which rolled over the Saviour upon the Cross you must measure it by the intensity of the sunshine in which He had dwelt from all eternity.

In like manner, death is only a relative term. A stone, a corpse, does not know that it is dead; there must be life to know death. S. Paul's soul was earnestly alive when he said, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If he had not spiritual life, he never could have said that. The bad principle in us wants nothing to rouse and lash it into fury but to have the beauty of goodness fairly presented to it.

This was the effect which the law—'holy, just, and good,' as he called it—had upon S. Paul's mind. Observe some of his expressions; 'I had not known sin, but by the law.' 'Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.' 'Sin worked death in me by that which is good.'

In fact, such is man, that it needs little else but that a thing should be forbidden to make him wish to do it; and the prohibition of a passion is an incentive enough to make him indulge it.

II. And further, in the same argument, if there be a real, living agent, the enemy of our souls, the instigator to evil, the love of our misery, the hater of the glory of Christ, is not it to be believed that when a man attempts to escape from his thralldom, he will rivet his chains, or put forth his fascinations more powerfully against that man? Is not it then that he will rear himself into his giant form, or that he will exert a supreme royalty, as we conceive he did, when he stood up before the Son of Man, and said, 'Fall down and worship me'?

Indeed, this truth, that there must be grace before there can be conflict, and that the conflict follows the grace, lies very deep in the first prophecy of the Bible, that threat to Satan, therefore that promise to man, that some future day was coming, when that deadly concord, which was then existing between the two seeds, and which

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was our world's ruin, would be broken up by the appearance of a Saviour, and the strength of the virulence was made the beauty and the sweetness of the promise: 'I will put'—evidently a thing not then existing—'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

You, then, who feel your conflicts, you to whom the inner life is an agitation little guessed by those who see only the assumed calmness of a shallow surface; you, who wake up every morning to fight again and again the old battle of yesterday; you, who are to yourselves not as one nature, but two—not two, but many, and all arrayed against all—lift up your head out of the dust of that blinding fight, lift up your head, and rejoice! The fact that it is now no longer peace but war is your token of good. The severer the onslaught, the surer that token grows. They are wonderfully proportioned the one to the other—those forces that contend in that little ground of your heart; and you need no other proof but that the day is hot to be sure, and He is 'bringing you to His banqueting-house, and that His banner over you is love.'

And it will be a great help to you, if you thus lay down at once, with yourself, that the conflict is not an accident, but a necessity, not exceptional in your case, but an universal rule, that it is the very condition of a Christian calling, and a part of the Christian's inheritance; it is the badge of discipleship, it is the fellowship of Jesus. And whatever else they may have gone through, or have been spared, out of this tribulation came every one of those saints who now stand before the throne, arrayed in white robes, with the palms in their hands.

III. We see, then, that in this warfare, there is, at least for a long time, a singular balance. Look, for instance, at the exact intention of the text, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,' i.e. the natural or carnal part of a renewed man puts forth strong desires against the spiritual part, and the spiritual part puts forth strong desires against the natural and carnal part,—and 'these are contrary'—lie—as the original Greek word is,—'lie over against the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

Which way? Cannot do the good things you would, because of the carnal part? Or, cannot do the evil things you would, because of the spiritual part? Which? Certainly both. Chiefly the latter. You cannot do the bad things you would because of the resistance or the prohibition of the spiritual taste that is in you.

In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—never let go the comforting belief that that seventh chapter of the Epistle to the

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Romans is a real portraiture of S. Paul's experience when he was a believer, and therefore of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; to give up that chapter as a picture of S. Paul's mind long after his conversion would be almost to yield a citadel of truth—in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, S. Paul places it rather the other way. There, he grieves that he could not do good, because of the evil that was present with him; but here to the Galatians, he gives more the comfort that they could not do the evil because of the countervailing good that was in them. The truth lies in bringing together both these. If the sin hinders the grace, so and yet more does the grace hinder the sin. And so the evenness of the balance makes the strength and the violence of the combat.

Sometimes, it may be a true and a wise way of viewing it, that your heart is a field in which two adverse parties are carrying on their external feud; that both Christ and Satan are using you for the exhibition of their power; that it is not against you, chiefly, that those attacks are levelled, and those shafts pointed, but against Christ in you; that the fierceness of the hostility is towards the actual Christ that is now in you; that He, and not you, He in you and you in Him, the powers of darkness in you hate and assail; and that they are taking you only, as it were, by the way; that against Him is the rancour, to wrong Him is the aim; and to you, that He may be wounded in you.

How pleasant the inference, how sure the resting-place, God can hold His own, God can take care of His own, He must go into the pre-eminence; and I with Him—my victory is sure!

But whether you ever adopt this view or not—and it would not be well to view it thus always—but whether you ever adopt it, you will certainly be right to recognise always, very plainly and very absolutely, the two distinct natures or powers, which now are in you as a regenerate man. Do not extenuate the sin because of the grace, and do not disparage the grace because of the sin. Here lies a double danger, and the path runs narrow between two precipices.

A few—a very few, I trust—say very presumptuously, and with awful speciousness—'Because of the grace that is in me, I am no longer a sinner; I must not pray as a sinner, I must not feel as a sinner.'

Very many more, with a most unfilial timidity, and a most unscriptural reason, say, 'Because I have so much sin in me, there can be no grace; I cannot believe, that, being what I find myself, I am a child of God.'

Admit both—confess to both—act upon both. There is a side, oh! how dark! all blackness; not a single pure motive ever lay in my heart; not one good act fit to be weighed in the balances of the

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sanctuary have I, ever since I was born, presented to God. Pride, selfishness, unbelief, temper, lust, disobedience, fill everything. The trail of the serpent lies on every spray of thought and feeling within my breast. 'In me dwelleth no good thing.' I am vile. That is earth's side.

Now, all praise to the glory of God's grace, turn the portrait, and see it under the falling of another light. 'He that is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.'

Understand this verse. There is a sinless nature in a believer: that new nature is the man; more strictly the man than his old nature of sin, because God sees in it: that is to be for ever and ever, and that does not sin, and that is the man. 'He that is born of God sinneth not.'

Christ in me—and that Christ in me is my being, I own no other—'Christ in me the hope of glory.' 'Know ye not, every one of you, that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?' And Christ in you, the Kingdom of Heaven is in you. Now you are 'light in the Lord,'—now ye are holy—now ye are kings and priests—now ye are complete.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Flesh *versus* the Spirit.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
GALATIANS V. 17.

I. **T**HE intrinsic faultiness of every life.

Two courts sit in judgment upon every proposed action.

What is the matter?

Their judgments contradictory.

1. The lower animals are not constructed so.

2. Lower types of man are not so.

(The complacency of savages.)

3. Many are either dimly or not at all aware of this contradiction.

(The chronic wicked—the frivolous and shallow.)

4. It awakes and develops in highest type of man.

II. The first purpose of religion is to stir up a divine discontent!

'And so I live, you see,
Go through the world, try, prove, reject.
Prefer, still struggling to effect
My warfare; happy that I can
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Not left, in God's contempt, apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
Tame in Earth's paddock as her prize.'

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III. The relation of Jesus to this fact of human life.

1. He could not escape its operation.

The Temptation.

(The 'lust of the flesh,'—for 'bread.'

The 'lust of the eye,'—for 'all the Kingdoms,' etc.

The 'pride of life,'—'cast thyself down,' etc.)

2. His gift of the Holy Spirit to reinforce the spiritual side.

S. D. M'CONNELL.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Grateful Leper.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. S. LUKE xvii. 15, 16.



HE Lord chooses His own way, and His own time, to bless us. And there is a vast difference as to our manner of receiving His blessings.

I. Now for our first lesson. It is this: that the Lord chooses His own way, and His own time, to bless us. (1) (2)

His heart yearned towards those ten sufferers. He longed to display His love and kindness towards them. And He might have done so at once; but He withheld His bounty for a while, and waited till they had left Him, and were fairly on their way to the house of the priests, before He bestowed His blessing. This was probably to try their faith.

And so does He sometimes act with us. Can you not remember some time in your past life, when you felt uneasy and unhappy? There was a weight that lay heavy on your mind. Jesus knew what you were suffering; and His heart went out towards you. He could have relieved you at the time.

But no, 'He waited to be gracious.' And perhaps you were somewhat impatient under your trial, and were disposed to cry out with a half-stifled murmur, like the mother of Siserā, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' And yet how much better—and how much wiser—to wait the Lord's own time; for it may be, the blessing is on its way; the deliverance will come at the proper moment. It is not when we please, but when

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He pleases. And then, when the gift is bestowed, do we not feel ashamed that we were so impatient, so distrustful?

Learn then, that although the Saviour may seem to withhold His grace, and may appear as though He heard not our prayer, and was unwilling to supply our want, He is only choosing His own time for its bestowal.

II. So much then for the way in which our Lord gives His blessings; it is sometimes after a long delay. And now let us see what the miracle teaches us, as to the manner in which men receive the Lord's gifts and blessings. There is as great difference in our conduct and feelings, as there was in the case of those lepers.

When we receive any signal mercy from the Lord, we exclaim, perhaps, 'Thank God!' There is a momentary acknowledgment, an outburst of natural feeling, but it stops there. There is no turning to God, no loving Him with a new and purer love. We draw no nearer to the Saviour. We allow Him to remain afar off.

It is sad to think that only one of them showed a really right spirit, such as we should imitate. And he was a Samaritan, a kind of Jewish dissenter—the least favoured of them all, and whose ingratitude would have been more excusable than the rest.

And now see how he acted. He is indeed a beautiful example of real Christian gratitude. There were these three marks of true thankfulness in him.

It cost him something.

There was a hearty earnestness about it.

It was accompanied by self-abasement.

Let us bear in mind, that it is not enough to be fervent in prayer at the time of our distress, as was the case with these lepers; but let us do what is far more difficult; let us return, and give hearty praise unto Him who has so graciously heard our prayers, and relieved our want.

BISHOP OXENDEN.

Where are the Nine?

Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? S. LUKE xvii. 17.

THERE is more prayer than praise in the world. It ought to be the reverse. There should be more praise than prayer. For what we have received is much more than what we want. Our mercies accumulate much faster than our necessities.

I. Before we can estimate any benefit, we need to measure it, not by the value we put upon it when we have it, but by the appreciation with which we held it when it was not.

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It is a humbling fact, that we never realise the true worth of any thing but by its absence. It will be a great part, no doubt, of final punishment, happiness absent; God gone! Oh, how precious will that thing seem then, which now looks so very ordinary. What would we not give for one moment, such as this moment we are now living, this moment with all its immensities, all its offers, all its openings, all its possibilities!

II. We are not sufficiently conscious and careful of special temptations, which have been following close in the traces, and haunting the threshold, of our great mercies. Our deliverance from trouble, our recovery from sickness, our escape from the sense of condemnation, our early gushes of religious joy, our restoration to happiness, which we thought the safest, they are the most dangerous and the most testing passages of life. All the history of the Church, from Adam in his first delicious joy in Paradise, or Noah just coming out of the ark, or Lot from Sodom, or Abraham in his entrance to the land of promise, or the Israelites at the foot of the mount, or Saul after one year's empire, or David sitting at his ease, or Solomon just getting his riches, or Elijah fresh from his great triumph, or Hezekiah risen from his sickness, on to the disciples in the Transfiguration, or SS. Peter and John at the very side of Jesus, or S. Paul descending from the third heaven,—all tell the same tale, and confirm the same truth, of the close proximity of the most dire assaults to the largest privileges; and repeating, over and over again, the lesson of the lepers.

III. You will find an explanation of the apparently impossible problem of our gross ingratitude in the fact that we very little think when any gift comes to us what it cost. Would it be so little to you, would it be so commonplace, could you pass it by so lightly, would it leave no vestige, if you remembered it is Christ who purchased it for you with His own Blood!


JAMES VAUGHAN.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Zeal without Consistency.

And he said, Come unto me and see my zeal for the Lord . . . But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart. 2 KINGS x. 19-31.

I.  DOUBT whether in these days we are not in danger of too much disparaging zeal. Zeal is the same word as fervour. In its forcible original meaning, it is the bubbling up of the boiling spirit, whether in the excitement of some human emotion, or in the jealousy of a devoted heart for God's honour. It is the opposite of an impassive, a cold-hearted and a cold-blooded indifference. It is the opposite of that disposition which can stand tamely by, while man is oppressed or God dishonoured. It is the outburst of that generous indignation which cannot endure to see right trampled underfoot by might. This is what we mean by zeal. The zeal of Jehu was of a lower order than this. This zeal can scarcely be without obedience. It is inconceivable that there should be a real, an active, a self-denying concern for God's honour and for the souls of others, where there is no care to walk watchfully before Him in holiness. We have parted company therefore with Jehu and with his direct example, when we speak of zeal in its higher and nobler workings. Yet even Jehu may reprove. We all know what the boiling up of the spirit within us is or may be: but which of us has ever known it save for himself; in the assertion of his own rights, in the vindication of his own honour? Any zeal for God, even an ignorant, even a mistaken, even a rash zeal, were better far for us than none.

II. And this brings us, in the second place, to apply to ourselves, in the way of counsel and warning, the unfavourable part of the character before us. Jehu had a zeal for God, but Jehu nevertheless took no heed to walk in God's law with all his heart.

Jehu took no heed, we take no heed, to the will of God. We think we know all about it; or we think that a little deviation will not be noticed, will not be punished, certainly will not be fatal: we admit into our lives little irregularities, into our hearts little dark places, and think that the general tenor may still be acceptable, that the general colour may not be dark but bright. And then we find,

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by bitter experience, that the beginning of sin, like the beginning of strife, is as the letting out of water, hard to restrain when it has once been suffered.

So long as ours is a grudging service, it will also be a thankless one: so long as we weigh and measure our acts for God, they will be burdensome, and they will be unproductive. Give all, and all will be happiness; because all will be unity, all will be peace. In this one sense, if in no other, the whole is less than its parts; to give a part is burdensome, to give the whole is light. Do this, and thou shalt live, was a condition of salvation too heavy for man; but thousands and tens of thousands have found rest and healing and joy in obeying the gospel call, My son, give Me thy heart!


DEAN VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Good Man's Character

His leaf also shall not wither; and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

PSALM i. 4.

- I.  HE good man is described first by negatives. What is he not?

1. He will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. If a man has no regard for God, if he shows by his words or by his actions that God is not in all his thoughts, then he cannot be a good adviser. The man who would be really happy must decline his counsel.

2. Again, the man who would be happy must not stand in the way of sinners. As some men are ungodly, so some men are sinners. As some men have not God before them, so some men live sinfully. You may not always be aware of it. You may be deceived about it for a time. But in the long-run a man of this sort will betray himself to those around him. Take heed how, in that most literal of all senses, you be found standing idle in the way of sinners!

3. But, once again, besides the dangers of walking and of standing, there is a danger also in sitting. The man who would be happy must not sit in the seat of the scornful. The Psalmist, under God's holy inspiration, knew us well. He wrote for all times, not only for his own, when he spoke of the seat of the scornful. Who is meant

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by the scornful? What is the character thus designated? It is the same which is elsewhere described as that of the scoffer. He is the man who mocks at everything, even at sin. 'O sit not thou,' the Psalmist says, 'in the seat of the scornful!' Aim not, if you love your soul, at the reputation of a censor, a jester, or a wit! More than this: avoid the seat where such men are enthroned: they will overhear your better judgment; they will insensibly lead you to think and to judge even as they.

II. These three are the good man's enemies; his, because God's. These things are what he is not; what he avoids and dreads. Now, what is he? Can we look within, and see where the secret lies, of his character, and of his life? Yes, the Psalmist goes on to say, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate,' or, as the Prayer-Book version gives it, 'exercise himself, day and night.' The Word of God is his counsellor. That advice, which he will not receive from the ungodly, he takes, and he seeks, from God Himself. His delight is in God's law, in God's Word. It is not, to him, a closed book. It is not a mere Sunday duty to read a chapter in it. No, it is his delight. 'Thy testimonies,' he can say, 'are my delight and my counsellors.' Day and night, in hours of business, of recreation, and of repose, he meditates in God's law: when he cannot be reading it, it is still dear to him, still treasured in his memory, still cherished in his heart. It guides his life, it directs his judgment, it breathes in his spirit, even when it is not in his hand, and not upon his lips.

III. And then, after reviewing the good man in these two aspects—what he is not, and what he is—what he eschews, and what he loves—we are briefly told, in the third and last place, what his course is, and what his end. 'He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' God's blessing is upon that man. There is no mistake as to his being under a divine benediction. Everything is, with him, orderly and seasonable. There is a regular process of culture and of fruit-bearing: nothing miraculous, nothing marvellous perhaps, in his condition or in his progress: we are not surprised by a sudden gathering in mid-winter, or by a harvest that precedes the sowing: we only see that, in him, as in a duly cultivated and well-watered garden, all things come in their season: the work of grace within goes on we know not how, but there is a growth, we see, a progress, and a maturity: even sorrow and affliction, like that digging and dunging of which a well-known Parable speaks, have their place in his training, and yield afterwards the peaceable fruit of righteousness in him who has been exercised thereby.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

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Divine Discouragements.

Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.
S. LUKE xvii. 10.

THE discouragements which Christ extended to men form a healthy subject of religious study. At a time when sect is competing against sect, and angling for proselytes with decorous bait, it is well to look back upon the beginning, when our Master presented no such inducements to the world of the shallow.

I. He was critical of men's language in addressing Him. If they meant something by calling Him 'good,' the name was pertinent: if they but caught up the trick of laudation, and rehearsed only what they heard, then the name was impertinent from them, however reasonable in its origin.

II. And from discouraging titles of honour or of dishonour, Christ went on to discourage the popular rhetoric of religion—the phrases that empty the mind in proportion as they occupy the mouth. For, a cry is too often, like a confession, but a waste upon externals of that moral energy which might be made available for thought and amendment within.

III. Our Master is also critical of men's logic. He will not have them accept premisses, and limit their conclusions to matters where those conclusions please, without extending them also to matters where they pain—and pain the most sensitive parts of us, our traditions and our prejudices. There is an imperativeness, He says, about human instinct. If we attend to our petty possessions on the Sabbath-day we must suffer God and the godlike to attend to their possessions, which are the suffering and the sad. There is an imperativeness in science; it cannot be circumscribed at pleasure within the bounds of the visible, 'ye know how to interpret the face of the earth, and the heaven: but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?' There is something imperative too about revelation. We dare not refuse the inference from its purposed language.

IV. But our Lord did more than object to irrelevant rhetoric, and halting logic, and questions that were not meet. He Himself volunteered discouragements of purposed severity—frosts for the ripening of immature grain. He brings an evasive character face to face suddenly with the perfect life and its demands. The young ruler might refuse the sacrifice of all that he possessed; but, Christ loving him, it was better for such a temperament that he turned away 'exceeding sorrowful' at hard conditions, than that he accepted easy

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ones and rejoiced. There is a possibility of that effort emerging from pain, which cannot emerge from contentment, and

‘a man’s reach must exceed his grasp,
Or what’s a heaven for?’

But there was no body of his fellow-men whom our Master was so plain in discouraging as His own intimates. ‘The nearer to Him, the nearer to the flame.’ Did they desire to drink of the cup prepared for the King, they should at least understand what its royal ingredients were—‘vinegar mingled with gall.’ There is a mosaic upon the roof of the Cathedral of S. Mark’s at Venice; in one compartment are the Apostles receiving the Pentecostal gifts, in another they distribute them by baptizing many nations, but beside every font stands some executioner or other waiting to claim the preacher as his eventual victim.

We accept the discipline of Jesus when we seek the company of those who discourage us rather than flatter; the friends who impute to us a capacity we have not exhausted; who prune our redundant phrases and screen us from the sunshine of compliments ‘in order that we may bring forth more fruit;’ the books that lift on high the splendid deeds of old, not extolling them as superhuman, but narrating them as deeds which are ‘common to man,’ man created in the image of God and reared by His Spirit; the books also which reveal the character of ‘the bravely dumb,’ who saw nothing wonderful in their own virtue, nothing deserving posthumous honour, who deemed that ‘man should live according to his nature during the few years which have been given him upon earth, and when the moment of departure has come, submit himself with sweetness, like an olive which in falling blesses the tree which has produced it.’ A fellowship with such friends, living and dead, makes for humility, but it is a humility which is a form of self-reverence, which is a protest against the vanity that sets a high estimate upon our actions, because it holds a mean estimate of our powers.

May we dare greatly in the persuasion of infinite energies! May we persist to the end in spite of infinitesimal results! May we know ourselves to be the bondmen of duty, and may we be comforted with the fair vision of the smile upon its face.

B. H. ALFORD.

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VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

God's Spirit. IT is not for men to make channels for God's Spirit, as
GAL. v. 16. they make channels for the water-courses, and say, 'Flow here, but flow not there.'

The Help of the Spirit. IT is not said (Rom. viii. 26) that 'the Spirit helps us' with comforts and with joys, but with sighs and 'groans';
GAL. v. 16. He helps us in sensible complaints of our wants, as well as in holy ravishments. Strength of grace is seen in holy joys; but truth of grace may be seen in sighs and groans.

The Workings of the Spirit. MARK the rain that falls from above; for the same shower that dropped out of one cloud, increaseth sundry
GAL. v. 16. plants in a garden; and, severally, according to the condition of each plant. In one stalk it renders a rose, in another a violet, divers in a third, and sweet in all. So the Spirit works its multifarious effects in several complexions, and all according to the increase of God

Christian Fruits. THE last best fruit which comes to late perfection, even in the kindest, is, tenderness towards the hard, forbearance towards the unbearings, warmth of heart towards the cold, philanthropy towards the misanthropic.
GAL. v. 22.

Fruit-bearing for Other's Sake. FRUIT-BEARING trees spend not all their sap and moisture upon themselves, or the increase of their own magnitudes; but the principal and purer part of it is concocted into some pleasant fruits whereof neither they nor their young sprigs ever come to taste; but they proffer it us, and when it is ripe, they voluntarily let it fall at their master's feet. Never did the olive anoint itself with its own oil, nor the vine make itself drunk with its own grapes, nor the fig-tree devour its own figs; yet they all strive to abound with fruits. . . . If happiness consisted in doing nothing, God who meant Adam to be so happy would never have set him about business; but as Paradise was his store-house, so also his work-house; his pleasure was his task (Gen. ii. 15). There is no state of man that can privilege a folded hand. In Paradise all things did labour for man; now man must labour for all things (Gen. ii. 9; iii. 17-19). Adam did work because he was happy; we, his children, must work

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that we may be happy. Heaven is for joys, hell for pains, earth for labour. Oh, then, let us be fruitful, that others' benefit may be ours, our benefit theirs, and the glory of all the Lord's.

Signs of Fruit. A SHEEP does not show she has had a good pasture by throwing up the grass she has eaten, but in that she has well digested it, and has wool and milk in plenty; so do you in the same manner not boast your reading to fools, but show by the actions that follow a true improvement, that you have read and profited.

Gratitude. GRATITUDE was fancifully said to be the memory of the heart; but alas! poor human nature, hearts are more than suspected of having wondrously short memories.

Gratitude. OH! how amiable is gratitude! especially when it has the Supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's-self. But the exercise of gratitude subsisted in Paradise when there was no fault to deplore, and will be perpetuated in heaven when 'God shall be all in all.'

A DEAF and dumb pupil of the Abbé Sicard, on being asked what he understood by the word 'gratitude,' wrote down immediately, 'Gratitude is the memory of the heart.'

WE may use the words of Socrates to his scholar, who saw in the contemplation of nature only a proof of his own insignificance, and concluded 'that the gods had no need of him,' which drew this answer from the sage: 'The greater the munificence they have shown in the care of thee, so much the more honour and service thou owest them.'

A GENTLEMAN of fortune, but a stranger to personal religion, one evening took a solitary walk through part of his grounds. He happened to come near a mean hut, where a poor man lived with a numerous family, who earned their bread by daily labour. He heard a continued and pretty loud voice. Not knowing what it was, curiosity prompted him to listen. The man happened to be at prayer with his family. He heard him giving thanks to God for the goodness of His providence in giving them food to eat and raiment to put on, and in supplying them with what was necessary and comfortable in

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the present life. He was struck with astonishment and confusion, and said to himself, 'Does this poor man, who has nothing but the meanest fare, and that purchased by severe labour, give thanks to God for His goodness to himself and family, and I, who enjoy ease and honour, and everything that is pleasant and desirable, have hardly ever bent my knee, or made any acknowledgment to my Maker and Preserver?' This occurrence was the means of bringing him to a real sense of religion.

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	GAL. VI. 11-18.
GOSPEL,	S. MATT. VI. 24-34.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	2 KINGS XVIII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	2 KINGS XIX. OR XXIII. TO VER. 31.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Take no Thought for the Morrow.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. S. MATTHEW vi. 34.



‘**I** WOULD have you without carefulness,’ was S. Paul’s fatherly wish for his Corinthian converts. And it is a very large class everywhere—careful Christians. Rather I would say, how exceedingly rare a thing it is to find one religious person who is realising all the security, and living in all the joyousness of one who is resting in all his works for time and for eternity, upon omnipotent love.

Here and there it has been my privilege to know one. But that one has generally been a very poor person.

And yet, what is all this carefulness about? Is it not a canker, which eats deep into your religion, which hinders every prayer, weakening your hands for every duty, and sullyng every thought? Is not it a darkening humour, which rises up and casts a gloom; shrouding every faculty of your mind; making your highest privilege,

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ay, and your highest happiness, seen through a cloud of petty anxieties, dim and distant? Is it not a grievous wrong to that heavenly Father of yours, who would look upon the face of His child, and see in its quiet gladness a reflection of His own felicity?

Now, as one great secret of an uncareful mind, our Lord has laid down this broad principle, that we should live every day within the day; making, as much as possible, its little horizon the boundary line, beyond which no prospect is to go forward, and no retrospect is to go backward.

The little birds live so. So God fed Elijah. The manna in the wilderness taught this truth. And our blessed Lord's life upon the earth was singularly one in which the provision was exceedingly small, and the calculations were very few.

But here the question naturally arises, Is not the Christian character essentially a provident one? Is it not the very nature of the new life, which is within us, that, taking all its interests and affections out of the present, as it passes, it throws them on to that which is coming, and always is living in the future? Are we not taught to hold nothing important but that which lies before us; and to account the days and hours, as they fly by, as a very little thing?

All this is perfectly true; and perhaps the very habit of a Christian's mind, in looking always onwards, has a tendency to make his temperament anxious. In his wakeful disposition, it becomes doubly difficult to go on, without this forecast and doubt. Every duty has its dangers; every height has its precipice; every light has its shadow.

But all this is only true of an early and imperfect religion. As a believer grows, his 'to-morrow' becomes more and more eternity. He is so conscious that he is always walking on the margin of another world; he so delights to feel that world before him, that all the interval that lies between him, be it long or short, is just as it were a parenthesis. He goes along the side of the valley; and he looks across to the mountains on the other side. He looks at them, till they begin to seem to him always closer and closer. Life seems to him to be but as a little space before the break of day, and the dawn of eternity.

And this is the very man who stands in the attitude, according to the divine Master's instruction, of the to-morrows of this present life: the remnant of his existence, with all its anticipations, is absorbed in the all-absorbing consideration of eternity—eternity.

So it comes to pass, that the very forethought of the Christian, which becomes the law and condition of his being, turns into the remedy for every unhappy disposition; and he 'takes no thought for

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the morrow,' being engrossed in the thought of that never-ending eternity which lies before him.

Now, God's great intention concerning every one of us is, that we should be kept in a state of continual happy dependence on Him, in order that we may be humbled and mortified every moment. Therefore He will never allow you so to pass any moment of your life, that you should be independent of Him any other moment of your life.

The builders of the Tower of Babel attempted to do that. Nebuchadnezzar was for doing it, when he looked out from his palace and said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' The fool in the parable did it, when he said, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'

All these, and many others, were for making a provision for 'the morrow.' And you remember what folly, and what misery, and what judgment God wrought upon it all!

But God would have you—every day, and every hour, and every moment, absolutely hanging upon Him for supply, for guidance, for grace, for peace, for life, and all that makes life worth the living.

Your breath is to be faith; your food, the promises; your strength, your union with Christ; and your life, the fact that Christ lives, and that He lives for ever.

Hence, God does not act with you, as we often act. He does not give you once for all an impulse, which is to carry you on all the rest of your appointed course; but He undertakes to help you, by fresh and fresh acts of grace. They shall come, moment by moment, to the very moment of your death. That is Isaiah's beautiful prayer—'O Lord, be thou their arm every morning.'

God does not inspire your mind with one great universal wisdom, and then leave you; but He gives you the right of momentary access to Himself; and then He says, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'

He does not render you by a fiat self-sufficient for all your difficulties; but He secures you by a promise, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.'

He does not pledge Himself to your fancies; but He allows me now to say to you, 'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

He does not fill your basket and your store with a complement for the journey; but He puts into your hand a small cruse, and a little barrel; and then He undertakes, and He says, 'Seek ye first the

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kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Now all this is done, to drive us to live by the day: to let the day's affairs fill the day's thoughts.

And here let us stop for a moment, and see the benefit of it.

And, first, as respects our pleasures. If I understand it, the way to enjoy anything, is to hold it graspingly; look at it intently, and to dwell on it undistractedly.

Now we do not say, but that every present pleasure of the Christian is immensely enhanced by the light and joy which are thrown back upon it, from the happiness which is yet to come. Just as snow-clad mountains in the distance give a distinctness in the nearer prospect, so every child of God knows well how the joy is heightened, by the privilege of not having to dilute it, by anxiety for any future good. For how often have we felt some very pleasant thing shaded, almost embittered, by the recollection that will come, 'There are other events coming on in quick succession.' So that no one seems to me to have learnt the art of really enjoying anything, who has not learnt it in God's school.

How can a man enjoy his family, how can a man enjoy society, or, how can a man enjoy solitude, who has his mind disturbed about the future? This seems to be the fountain of all happiness—'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

Or look at the same truth again, as respects your pains. Who does not know that that which makes the painfulness of any pain is the thought that that pain will continue? Very few pains are there, either of mind or of body, which would not be quite tolerable, if we thought that that moment's pain was all we had to endure. It is the sorrow and the pain which are coming, which are so hard to bear. The unknown, and the undefined, are always the largest weights; in the same proportion, suspense is always the greatest of evils. So that he has well-nigh found a panacea, who has thoroughly imbued his mind with the truth, 'Take no thought for the morrow.'

Or, once more, look at duties. The secret of doing anything well, is concentration. Every student knows that, every man of the world knows that. But what thoughtful man can really concentrate, when he has a future unprovided for? See, for instance, how one peculiar embarrassment, how one family trouble, incapacitates a man for enterprise. Who can do duties thoroughly, who can be free enough, be perfectly concentrated, who can be at ease, but the man who feels that he has nothing that is not provided for, in time and eternity, and all covenanted to work together for his good?

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Now, let us look then, how the matter stands between a believer and all evil.

Now do not misunderstand me, God does not say that any one shall not be conversant with evil. Rather this passage lays it down clearly, every day as it falls—some days more, some less—but every day comes in, charged with the load of evil, it pleases our heavenly Father to put. But evils there will be—evils in our thoughts; evils in the circumstances around; positive evil; negative evil; social evil; moral evil; evil from the hand of God; and worse evil from the hand of man. Weakness, and sin, and temptation, and falls, and many sorrows, keener for another's anguish than our own. But 'sufficient for every day is the evil thereof.'

Meet life every morning as an evil thing. Prepare yourself for the day coming before you, as an evil thing. Look back upon the day past, as an evil thing. But for this very reason, because it is so evil, let it stand by itself.

Look at this especially about your sins. Every Christian is, or ought to be, in that state respecting his sins, that he has nothing to do except with the sins of the current day. As soon as he was converted he was justified; in other words, the very time when he first felt real faith and repentance, all the sins which he had ever committed from his childhood, up to that period, were freely, and fully, and perfectly cancelled. He was washed—clean as snow. From that time, he 'needeth not save to wash his feet.'

Each day, therefore, he brings the guilt which he has been accumulating since last he prayed, and lays it at the foot of the Cross, to be cleansed in the same fountain. But this is all he has to do with it. It needs not to be passed to a current account; for a debt once paid is never again due. Neither need he be thinking of the sins and transgressions into which he may, and into which he will fall again—because to-morrow's guilt will find to-morrow's grace. He has only to feel penitently, and cast the day's burden where, surely, alone it can be laid—where the burden of other days has been cast.

Oh! what a happy lot is theirs, who having nothing between them and God but the sins of the day; who, knowing the past is all forgiven, and that they have the same grace to fall back upon when it is needed, can say, 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

And as it is with your sins, so it is with all your cares and anxieties. You know how apt the mind is to see coming troubles, all gathering themselves into one great focus, which looks impossible, simply, because it is seen all at once. The far-off hill is always steep; and he who stands in the sunshine, sees the cloud the blackest, as it lies spread over the distance.

But we have learnt that the trouble which comes, is very generally

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not the trouble which we expected, and when it comes, it does not come as it looked—all at once, in one intolerable mass; but it comes grain by grain; drop by drop; measuredly; a little here; a little there; something to-day, something to-morrow; and each moment made quite equal to carry its own proper weight, if we do not put to-morrow's portion into to-day's cup.

It will be a sweet, a prevailing argument with God, every moment, 'O Lord, think of me this day—for this is that to-morrow, of which thou didst command me not to think!'

And as you do this, the yesterdays will become memory's witnesses to God's mind; and the to-morrows will be fields for faith's peaceful exercise.


Living within each day, you will be at leisure for its sorrows; or its obligations; or its joys: to bear the pain, or the disappointment uncomplainingly; to throw your whole soul into the duty which presses; and to fling wide open to your delight the doors of ecstasy. And He will be honoured, who planned the map of your destinies, when He beholds your mind confirmed to the chart, because your heart is reposing on the wisdom of the Planner!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Glory of the Cross.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. GAL. vi. 14.

- I.  HERE is a use of the word *Cosmos* in Scripture to which the test of its crucifixion by the cross perfectly answers. This is the *cosmos* not of nature and not of man as God created either; not the beautiful universe in which philosopher, and poets, and simple loving souls which are neither, delight to revel and expatiate; not the race made in God's image, partaking of His intelligence, and His forethought, and His sympathy, and His love, and even in its ruins prognosticating reconstruction; but that aspect, that element, of each which sin has defiled: matter as the foe of spirit, and man as the bond-slave of the devil. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, this is the world. To have these things in the heart is to be worldly. This is the disease, the

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threefold disease, which Christ came to heal when He undertook the cure of worldliness.

II. In the crucifixion by the cross there are two stages.

1. There is, first, a testimony. The Cross is a witness. It gives evidence against the world. The Cross is evidence against the vanity of worldliness; bids the man who would be a man do battle for the thing that is, and look for his reward to a world not of shadows and to a life not of time.

2. The Cross is a power too. That ugly, that repulsive, that horrible object, that frightful, that revolting execution, that gibbet accursed of God and man, has become the magnet of humanity. Christ foretold it, and it is true. Wheresoever the Gospel of the Cross and the Crucified is preached, there are found practical evidences—‘infallible proofs’ S. Luke would call them—of the power of the Cross to crucify men to the world. Not by trickery or magic, not by accident or machinery, but by the Spirit of the living God, is this influence upon hearts and lives wrought. Christ crucified becomes in His turn the mutual Crucifier of man and the world.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Crucifying the World.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. GAL. vi. 14.

THERE were some of the first Christians who felt ashamed of the death to which their Master had been put. Not so S. Paul. To him it seemed altogether glorious. For him the Cross was the central feature, the dominant figure in all human history. He gloried in it above all things. It seemed to the world unutterably shocking and shameful. To him it seemed the most splendid thing in all the universe. It was a tremendous object-lesson of the love of God. It was the great power of God unto salvation. It was the means by which Christ would draw all men unto Him. Its outstretched arms would gather in the whole world. He foresaw how it would ‘tower o’er the wrecks of time,’ how ‘all the light of sacred story would gather round its head sublime.’ All his views of life and death and eternity were influenced by the Cross. It seemed never to be absent from his thoughts.

I. When, therefore, he undertook to define his relations to the world, he could only see them in the light of the Cross, he could not think of them apart from the great transaction upon Calvary, he could only describe them in terms of the Cross. His language is somewhat

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foreign to the spirit of our age, but it is the mother tongue of the Christian heart. His words are strikingly vivid and significant.

Looking first upon the world's side of those relationships, he exclaims, 'The world is crucified unto me.' What does He mean by that?

II. When Christ hung upon the Cross, the world thought it was condemning and crucifying Him. It was really condemning and crucifying itself. It was the world that led Him to the Cross and hung Him there, that drove the cruel nails, that challenged Him to come down from the Cross, that surged round its base and gloried in His shame. It was the world, not the Christ, who was on trial, who was condemned, who was eternally disgraced that day. S. Paul sees with the eye of faith, over against the three crosses of Calvary another cross, a towering shameful cross on which a wicked world has hung itself, dishonoured, disgraced, doomed. He can never forget that his Lord 'was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.' It hated Him, rejected Him, did its best to destroy Him utterly. It strove to judge Him, but only judged itself. It convicted itself of the most awful wrongs which were ever done in heaven or earth. Since that day S. Paul could only think of the world as a self-condemned criminal gibbeted before the eyes of angels and men, a culprit whose base and bloody sin has found him out and brought its due reward, a malefactor whose evil purposes have been exposed, and who is no longer to be feared. Henceforth, he regarded it, and feared it no more than a condemned criminal writhing on a cross. The world was crucified to him.

But more. He was 'crucified to the world.' He was on the Cross with Christ. He viewed the world from the standpoint of the Cross of Christ. It had lost its charms, forfeited its claims. Its glamour was gone; he had nothing more to hope or to fear from it; he had done with the world. What did he care for its pleasures, its prizes, its good opinion, its success, or its scorn? What could it offer to him who gloried in the Cross of Christ, and believed it to be the throne of glory everlasting? The world was for ever crucified to him, and he to the world.

Strong and shocking as S. Paul's language may seem to us, it was perfectly true. The world did crucify Christ, and it would do so again, if He came amongst us in the flesh to-day.

III. It is the same world, only a little better for nineteen centuries of Christianity. The only point from which the Christian can see it in its true light is the Cross of Calvary. If he is a true Christian, he must see it from there. He is crucified with Christ. He cannot forget the attitude of the world towards the Cross, cannot forget

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that the world made the Cross. He looks down from his cross of glory where he hangs with Christ and sees the world on its cross, its cross of shame, and he would not change places for all that the world has to give. He glories in his cross.

Have we learned so to do? Are we looking at the world from the vantage-ground of the Cross? We must learn to do so, if we are to be joint-heirs with Christ in the triumphs He has won. We must identify ourselves with Him and look at the world from his point of view—the highest, the truest, the best standpoint from which to estimate its real worth. Let us earnestly beseech God to give us the spirit of S. Paul, to open our eyes, so that we may see how true it is that in the eternal Sacrifice of the Cross the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. WYLLYS REDE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Neutrality.

No man can serve two masters. S. MATTHEW vi. 24.



LET us consider, first, the characteristics of neutrality, next its causes, and lastly its issue.

I. Take that mightiest of Christian teachers, the poet Dante. When he has passed through the black and rocky gate of hell he comes to a region where horrible outcries, tones of anguish, accents of rage, voices deep and hoarse, and smitten hands, make a tumult which sounds through that turbid and murky air; he asks Virgil who those wretches were. He is told they are the dreary souls of those who lived indeed without infamy, yet without praise, mingled with the caitiff crew of angels who were neither rebels against God nor faithful to Him, but were only for themselves. Heaven chased them forth because they would have soiled her beauty; hell itself spurns them as even more despicable than the wicked, the world has forgotten their blind, greedy, nameless, selfish lives; mercy and justice alike disdain them. So he sees them, swept for ever round the utmost confines of hell in numbers so numberless that he could not have believed that death could have undone so many; and they follow the giddy flutterings of the flag of Acheron, a crew of caitiffs hateful to God and to His enemies, abject, naked, stung by wasps and hornets, and their faces smeared with blood and with tears. Could there be a more

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scornful picture of those who are dead but who have never lived, the selfishly neutral, the greedily callous in the great unceasing conflict between good and evil, the trimmers and shufflers, the half-and-half people who do not care for the approbation of God, but for what the world says, or who, having sold themselves for the indulgence of their meanest vices, are condemned to punishments as mean and paltry as their lives.

II. But, secondly, since we have seen the characteristics, what are the causes of these deplorable attempts at double-mindedness; this endeavour, in the worst sense, to make the best of both worlds, this double-mindedness? The causes are mainly two: indolence and unbelief. On the one hand, men do not try to grapple with the problem of their own faith. Finding it inconvenient with their aims and desires, they content themselves with the thing they call Agnosticism, which often means nothing in the world except that they will not trouble themselves to make up their own minds about questions which of all others are the most tremendous and the most pressing. The other and no less fatal form of this infidelity is that which professes God with the lips but denies Him in the heart. Of every form of neutrality, of all hypocrisy whether conscious or unconscious, the worst and commonest cause is some besetting sin, some bosom-transgression which seems to have become a part of the very nature.

III. Lastly, what is the end of a life which is thus only half sincere? Terrible to say, it can only end in one thing, unless it be broken off and abandoned, and that one thing is spiritual death. 'She that liveth in pleasure,' says Scripture, 'is dead while she liveth.' Are there no such living dead here? The dead who have died lie in hundreds beneath us; may there not be hundreds of dead who are living all around us? The poet saw in the lowest hell the soul of the friar Alberigo, and was amazed, because he knew that the man was still alive, and he asks for an explanation: he receives the awful answer that sometimes a man seems to live above, and eat and drink and sleep and put on clothes, but in reality his soul has sunk down even in his lifetime into the abyss. He has become that most fearful kind of ghost, not a soul without a body, but a body without a soul.

DEAN FARRAR.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The Death of Josiah.

2 KINGS xxiii. 29, 30.



IN his days Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Meggido, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Meggido, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre.

If you would see the greatness of Josiah, you must look at the history of his life, not at the account which we have of his death. If the text of this sermon had been the only notice of Josiah you would not have known that he was different from, or better than, other men of his time; you might have grieved over his death, and pitied one who seemed to fall so far short in glory of Solomon and others of the kings. But no, Josiah's reign was a most glorious one, more glorious I should say than Solomon's. He won for himself an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and having done this it mattered little whether it was a fever, or old age, or the sword of Pharaoh-Nechoh, who was the messenger to call him away.

And therefore I think that the text may be very instructive to us as a picture of the manner in which God sometimes calls His servants away when they have done their work. When I read in Holy Scripture of a man who like Josiah found his kingdom in confusion, and idolatry rampant, and false altars raised, and crime and pollution abundant, and when I read of him as setting himself to the work of purification with all his heart and with all his soul, I seem to read a parable describing the condition of each true member of Christ.

Josiah's kingdom could not have been worse than the heart of each of us if left to itself, and he made it his business to cleanse his kingdom, even as each one of us, if he fulfils his promises, is bound to put out of his heart all that is unclean, all that maketh a lie, all that exalteth itself against God.

And the moral which I desire to draw from the text is this, that he who does his work in the proper time, who does not put off till old age the work of youth, nor to the hour of death the labour of life, may be quiet and unconcerned of the way in which God is


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pleased to call him; if he is called by some sudden providence when engaged in his work, or summoned by some speedy sickness, or in whatever way God may take him, he may be of good cheer and of a quiet mind, knowing that God will do all things well.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. S. MATTHEW vi. 22.

I. N a time of strongly conflicting ideas and aims, and I suppose that our own is such a time, there are obvious and special dangers, very subtle but very formidable, to wise and faithful thinking, from the mere fact of the world being divided roughly at such a time into two great camps, of the old and new. Whatever line a man takes, whether he attacks or defends, whether he accepts what is received as ancient and common, or is dissatisfied with it, and devotes himself to criticism, to discovery, to the reconstruction or overthrow of what he finds established, or the substitution of something better in its place, in either case he is exposed to temptations, moral temptations, quite independent of the goodness and badness of his cause, but greatly affecting the habits of his mind, the course of his thoughts, the character of his judgments. The history of every great controversy, of every great revolution, of every great reform, proves this. I do not doubt that the history of the greatest of all revolutions, that Divine Reform of all things which came with the gospel, would, if we knew its earlier portion better, exhibit and prove it also. I have no doubt that not on one side only, but on both we should find below the great public cause, personal feelings, private motives, individual differences of characters, helping to determine men's choice of their position. The mere fear and dislike of change, the aversion from possibly indefinite trouble, the natural slowness of most of us to imagine that things can be different from what we have been accustomed to, the sense of what we actually have, the impatience of doubt, of perplexity, of importunate questioning, where we can see no need for them; all these are strong forces on the side of what is old, whatever it may be. But not less strong on the side of novelty and

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attack is the mere enthusiasm of change, the sympathy with enterprise, the spur to the imagination of the possibilities of hitherto unthought-of improvement, the impatience, in eager and sanguine natures, of that which keeps others back, the scorn of pretexts and apologies, the pleasure of the difficulty and the strife, the *gaudia certaminis*, the end forgotten in the interest of the fighting, the keen satisfaction of feeling one's-self original, and bold, and adventurous, nay even of startling others, by our strong and fearless words. No man, I suppose, has ever gone through days of controversy, without observing in himself and in others, the presence and the mischief of a bias quite outside the subject of dispute, and every man who cares for the interest of truth will wish, though it may be in vain, that his own experience might help others to be on their guard against these subtle and constant forces, which, in every controversy of whatever nature, gives a certain drift to men's minds, like the unfelt currents of the sea, which sweep the ship stealthily and unawares out of its course.

So much may be said of most questions which divide men. But there are deeper and graver dangers besetting those religious problems which have come to the front in our days, and which some of us are called to think out. No one can speak of them without remembering that perhaps he himself is an instance of the many faults which he condemns. What he sees all around him, what he sees in those from whom he differs, he may suspect in himself and in his own side. But not the least effective sermons are those which a man preaches, if not against himself, yet with the full consciousness of his own temptations and mistakes. And no one I think can be desirous to be true to truth, can value that 'freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom,' which ought according to great authority to be the aim and fruit of all our education, without having disquieting thoughts as to the way in which the highest subjects of human interest are sometimes dealt with.

II. To take one point. A great conflict is going on between Christianity, and ideas and beliefs which would destroy or supplant it. We look on, we cannot help it, for the world is full of it; we follow with interest the turns of the battle; we pass judgment on the skill of the combatants. It is conducted with ability, with courtesy, with feeling, with conviction, and purpose. We remark on the improved character of the discussion; the times at least of Voltaire, we observe with satisfaction, are past. But with all the literary power, and all the real and often pathetic earnestness shown in it, there is wanting often, as it seems to me, an adequate sense of the full issues raised by it, a sense of what in fact depends on it. I do not think, at any rate, that the majority of those who follow this

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tremendous debate reflect, or in any degree realise, what is involved in victory or defeat. It is not victory or defeat for a mere philosophical theory or criticism. It is not a question of something in prospect and at a distance, something to be developed in time, something which raises the possibility of a future policy, retards or brings near a future change in institutions. It is a present, instant result. If the opponents of Christianity are right, if the victory lies with them, it is much more than that Christians are mistaken, as men have been mistaken about science, about principles of government, about the policy or the economy of a state. It means that in religion now, as widely as men are living and acting, all that is now, is false, rotten, wrong. Our present hopes are utterly extinguished. Our present notions are as unsubstantial as bubbles on water. We are living in a dream. We are wasting on an idol the best love, the highest affections, the purest tenderness which can dwell in human hearts.

When our Lord was upon earth, He bade men follow Him; the spell of His presence drew them and they followed without delay. We are separated from those days by the quarrels, the mistakes, the doubts, the crimes and scandals of many centuries. Men must often seek truth now amid uncertainties and perplexities, amid clashing opinions and loud challenges. How do we believe that He would wish them to behave? Would not He, who sympathises with every trial and distress of man, who to all who labour and are heavy laden opens the refuge of His consoling arms—would not He wish us to guard carefully the processes of intellectual work, to recognise its great place and function, and to keep it uncorrupt and pure; not to shrink from its full play, but to be watchful over the heart and its temptations? May we not read His lessons to an age like ours in those words in which the old Hebrew Masters of the conduct of human life described the excellencies and the pursuit of what they called wisdom, and what we call practical truth: its aim, its course, its difficulties, its reward? ‘Even from the flower till the grape was ripe’—this is their language—‘my heart hath delighted in her, from my youth up I sought her. My soul hath wrestled with her, and in my doings I was exact. I stretched forth my hands unto heaven above, and bewailed my ignorance of her. I directed my soul unto her, and found her in pureness. I have had my heart joined with her from the beginning; therefore shall I not be forsaken. My heart was troubled in seeking her: therefore have I gotten a good possession.’

I should be disloyal to Him whom I believe in and worship as the Lord of Truth, if I doubted that such seeking would at last find Him. Even if it do not find Him here, man’s destiny stops not at the grave, and many, we may be sure, will know Him there who did

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not know Him here. Be those stages what they may, as rough, as strange, as prolonged as they often seem to be, true and earnest seeking cannot be in vain. They will lead the honest and good heart to the truth and at last to the light it longs for. They will lead to Him who has the secret and the cure of human blindness as of human sin. They will lead to Him who has the key to every burdened soul, who hears the unuttered desire of every imprisoned spirit. None but He can help them. None but He can give them what they want. And they who shall seek shall find. At least, let us who believe in Him be patient, during this short waiting time of an endless life. Those whom He first called had more to endure. They had against them all the appearances of their time: they had against them more than we have, the opinion of society, the deepest and the lightest. But they were not moved. For they believed, as we believe, in one who shall come to decide all controversies, who will reconcile all contradictions, and dispel all ambiguities, and light up all dark things. In His own time, He—and none but He can—will solve the riddle of life: and then ‘we,’ as S. Paul says, ‘we shall know, even as we are known.’

‘Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently in Him.’ ‘Hope in the Lord, and keep His way,’ ‘The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.’ ‘Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.’ ‘The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.’ ‘The voice of the Bible is surely also the voice of reason. Only let us do our part now, not as children but as men. Only—to go back to where I began—let us have no sin against light and truth on our conscience, when we are on our death-bed.

DEAN CHURCH.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Glory. THE best kind of glory is that which is reflected from
GAL. vi. 14. honesty, such as was the glory of Cato and Aristides; but it was harmful to them both, and is seldom beneficial to any man whilst he lives.

Our Glory. WHAT more glorious master than God? What better
GAL. vi. 14. mother than the Church? How glorious is that calling that at once serves such a master and such a mother! As it is our

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glory to serve them, so it must be our glory to do them good service. God in us sets the world copies of piety, and we must live to others no less than preach. As we are more eye, so we are more looked at; motes in others' eyes are beams in ours. Many things are lawful that are not expedient. That which is reprobable in another is in us reproach; seeing it is so, what manner of men ought we to be?

Persecution. No servant of Christ is without affliction. If you expect
GAL. VI. 12. to be free from persecution, you have not yet so much as
as begun to be a Christian.

Mammon. MAMMON wins his way where seraphs might despair.
S. MATT. VI. 24.

Serving God and Mammon. No man can serve God and the world; but he may serve
God with the world. The world's slaves can never be
S. MATT. VI. 24. God's free men.

Righteousness. It was a well-known saying among the Jews, that if two
S. MATT. VI. 33. men only were to be saved, one certainly would be a
scribe, and the other a Pharisee. Certainly, unless our righteousness
exceed theirs, we shall never come to heaven; but how shall we
escape the nethermost hell if our unrighteousness exceed theirs?

Faithfulness knows no distinction between small and great duties.
There is no final strength but in righteousness.

Man's Righteousness. WHEREAS God's righteousness is one, and perfect, and
infinite, man's righteousnesses are various in degree and
S. MATT. VI. 32. kind, and that because they are but rays from the glory
of that Uncreated Light, the Just One.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, EPHESIANS III. 13-21.
GOSPEL, S. LUKE VII. 11-17.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . 2 CHRONICLES XXXVI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . NEHEMIAH I. AND II. TO VER. 9 OR
NEHEMIAH VIII.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

God's Love for Men.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. EPHESIANS iii. 14-19.



WHEN the Apostle once got fairly before his mind the fact that God feels a deep love for men, he was filled with amazement. It is a fact hard to believe and still harder to realise. Yet it is the starting-point of Christianity. It is the very core of the revelation of Jesus. His declaration that God is love has changed the temper and life of every man and every community which has come to believe that what he said was true. It has been a thousand times more potent to produce right living than had been the previous belief that God is power. That is to say, love is more potent than law; and this is the essence of the gospel. It is hard to believe it, for the

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facts seem to be against it. A ruler or a law can compel a certain course of action in those who come under them, and can compel it at once, whereas the affection of the ruler may be thrown away upon unworthy subjects, producing no results. Love seems weak unless force will clear the way for it, and hold its object down while love works its will upon him. Nevertheless, Jesus insists that God Himself is so constituted that He can never rest content until He shall have won for Himself the affection of all His creatures. He cannot compel this by force of any sort or in any sphere. Jesus uncovers the love of God for men, and allows it to work. He has serene confidence that in the end it will win an answering affection in every human soul. It may work by very sharp methods; for love can be cruel to be kind. But, according to Jesus, the object which God sets before Himself is not to break a recalcitrant will, or compel an obedience to His orders, but to draw all men to Himself. This theme is constantly played upon in the New Testament. It is the fact which is constantly appealed to as a motive. Whenever in any case it is accomplished, God's purpose is thought of as having been in that case secured. There may be much still to be desired in the life of a man who 'has fallen in love with God,' but there is no anxiety about the issue of such a life. A force is at work in it which will ultimately bring all the outlying discords of it into harmony.

'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'

'For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.'

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.'

Now, I have dwelt at some length upon this truth, not because I have been anxious to convince you that it is true, for I have no doubt you all assent to it in the abstract, but because I want it to sink into your minds until it awakens the doubt which always springs up concerning it whenever it becomes fairly grasped. That God loves men is likely to be believed just until one sees what the statement involves, and then it is seriously questioned. I think it well to start these questionings into life in order that we may dispose of them.

I. The first cause of difficulty is one's sense of his own insignificance as an individual atom in the universe of existence! That God

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should have some feeling, on a grand scale, toward humanity as a whole, does not sound unreasonable. But then think how many men there are, and have been, and will be. They are numbered by myriads. When one tries to bring the multitude before his imagination he becomes bewildered. Now, can we seriously think of God having a distinct and separate affection for each? But if this be not the fact, then His 'love for men' becomes a mere phrase not worth contending about. I hesitate to think that God cares for me as an individual, one way or another, that I am anything more to Him than an unnoticed unit in the great whole of things which He rules by fixed laws.

II. A still greater difficulty arises out of the fact of human unloveliness. We think of things being loved which are loveable. But men, taking them as a whole, are not very lovely. Even among one's own acquaintances, there are only a few who are even interesting, and very few indeed who inspire affection. Then think of the great mass who seem to exist for no special purpose. Stop for a little while at a corner on a fair and busy afternoon, and look at the crowds hurrying by. If you watch them steadfastly, they will, after a little, come to seem as automata, creatures driven by a purposeless restlessness. Look at their faces. Most are empty of expression, or else have an eager look which is still more forbidding. You can see that many are vicious, most are stolid. Their lives are narrow, their interests are petty, they awake no interest and provoke no love. This is the invariable impression produced upon one whose duty or office leads him to deal with multitudes. The public official, the clerk in a public office, the salesman in a great store, any one, in short, who comes personally in contact with multitudes of people for a considerable period of time, comes to have a sort of contempt for humanity. He has seen too much of it. Its foibles and petty faults have been before such a person so long that he has ceased to feel kindly. He has discovered the unloveliness of men.

Then call to mind that the humanity with which we are familiar, and which fails to touch our affection, is the best in existence. If you take in as well the millions of narrow-browed, dull, brutal people who toil in mines or hide in city slums; the worn-out, but still vicious millions of the Orient; the millions of semi-bestial savages in the Dark Continent and the isles of the sea—the average of the race falls so unspeakably low that it becomes of the utmost difficulty to conceive of God as even keeping it in mind, much less keeping in His love the individuals who compose it!

III. But there is a third difficulty far more formidable still. That is, the fact of human pain. If it be true that God loves His children,

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why does He leave them to suffer so? This has been the dark mystery of the ages. It has led men to atheism. It has led them to attribute to God the qualities of the devil. It has driven them in frantic despair to curse God and die. It has led men to grovel before God in the abject attitude of slaves before an Oriental despot. It has led them to throw their children into the flames for Moloch, to propitiate an angry deity by the costliest gifts. It leads many among us to think of a Law, instead of a Person, at the centre of things, so impassible is it, so indifferent to the cries of human agony.

Now, all these facts of human life S. Paul looks squarely in the face, and yet bursts out in praise of the goodness and loving-kindness of God. Why does he do so? What new light has he upon the 'painful riddle of life'? Why is his opinion concerning the disposition of God of any more value than that of another man? I ask you, then, to notice that he does not give his dictum as an opinion at all. It is not anything which he has thought out, or discovered, or reached by any method common among men. Jesus had said not long before that any one who saw Him would see the Father. There were some who did see Him. Not all who looked at Him, for many looked at Him without seeing or recognising Him for what He was, but some did. Among these was S. Paul. This sight of God in the face of Jesus Christ had the same effect upon him that it always has upon those who see Jesus. It changed his estimate of his fellow-men by changing his notion about God. It set all the facts of life with which he was familiar in a new light. They remained the same, but they no longer meant the same. As he learned from his Master what is the real disposition of God toward men, they ceased to be insignificant, contemptible, or hateful. They became pathetic, inspiring, dreadful. As an educated and exclusive Jew, he had thought of the mass as 'a people who know not the law, and are accursed.' As a Christian, the same people became so valuable that he was ready to pluck out his eyes for them, and even intimated that he would be ready to lose his own soul for them. This discovery that all men are sons of God is the copious spring out of which has flowed that unfailing 'enthusiasm of humanity' which is the mark of Christianity. It is only within Christendom that a man is held to be intrinsically valuable. This valuation is based, not upon what he shows at the moment, but of what he is in his very nature. The thing which strikes most painfully a traveller in a heathen land is the low estimate of human life. The natives may be gentle and kindly as in Japan, wise as in China, acute, subtle, and graceful as in India, but in no case are they shocked as we are by unnecessary waste or loss of human life. Philanthropy is in its origin Christian. It started from the revelation of Jesus Christ, the truth which He was the first

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to get men really to believe, that God has a personal interest in men; an interest which does not depend upon their character or their accomplishments, but upon their relationship to Himself. It is only so long as philanthropy is able to maintain connection with this, its base of supplies, that it remains effective. As has been shown a thousand times, whenever a man or a society which attempts charitable work, and which has begun with a distinctly religious motive, declines from its faith and comes to work upon a humanitarian basis, it loses both its enthusiasm and its effectiveness. This must be so in the nature of the case. Love for men is only possible in the presence of God.

So absolute is the Christian conviction of God's loving-kindness that he ventures to seek for the explanation of human pain in it. This would seem to be the extremity of wrong-headedness. But he does it clearly.

'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.'

Now, no theory of the origin or meaning of pain is altogether satisfactory. But is there any more reasonable one than this? It asserts in effect that the ills which assault men and torture them, or at best, take the zest out of living, are neither meaningless accidents which come from nowhere and for no reason, nor are they the purposeless agonies caused by the crampings of a soulless 'law,' but that they are the smartings from the stripes of a rod laid on reluctantly, but intentionally, by a father. It is quite true that we all see and feel many an ill which we cannot honestly account for on this theory. There are sufferings which do not educate. They teach no lesson to the victim, because they do not leave the victim alive to learn the lesson. Or the lesson is so obscure that its purpose cannot be read. A cyclone sweeps away a man's fortune and maims his child, and what fault is it meant to punish, or what lesson to teach? Was it a fault to build upon a fair and inviting prairie? Is the bare fact that there are cyclones in that region a truth worth learning at such a cost? This is all true, and there are a thousand ills which we are not able to place under this 'educational' theory of suffering. But, then,

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what other theory is there? Of course one can dismiss the problem as insoluble. He may clench his fist like Ajax, and defy the brandished darts of Jove. He may picture existence as a sphinx with expressionless face, with the soft, inviting breast of a woman, and the claws of a wild beast. He may think of a universe compelled by a law which has no self-consciousness, and which grinds without hate and without ruth. But I say without hesitation that none of these theories of life bring, to me at any rate, the same intellectual relief, to say nothing of moral uplift, as does the Christian doctrine that God is love, and that He is slowly school-mastering His children into a recognition of their relationship to Him.

S. Paul calls the love of God a mystery. It is so. All the primal, fundamental forces are mysteries. That is to say, they are entities of whose existence no one, to whom they have been revealed, can ever again doubt; but what they are in themselves, and how they work to fulfil their results, no man has ever seen. This is the case, for example, with regard to gravitation. It is a mystery. In fact, it is nothing but a name. But in the sphere of physical things it operates so generally, and its formulas bring so much intellectual rest, that wherever it is announced it is received by all who are capable of apprehending it at all. In the higher sphere of moral things, Jesus' declaration, that love rules *de facto* as well as *de jure* solves so many difficulties, and opens so many otherwise closed lines of motion, that the number who accept it as true has steadily increased for centuries. Longfellow set the deep Christian truth to verse:—

‘Love is the root of creation; God’s essence; worlds without number
Lie in His bosom like children; He made them for this purpose only.
Only to love and to be loved again, He breathed forth His spirit
Into the slumbering dust, and upright standing, it laid its
Hand on its heart, and felt it was warm with a flame out of heaven.’

S. D. M’CONNELL.

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II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Power of the Spirit.

The Power that worketh in us. EPHESIANS iii. 20.



It is a tremendous claim which is made in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The old Greek thinkers had dared to dream that somewhere up in heaven, could we but rise above the mists which shut it from our sight, would be found the pattern and the plan of all that is working itself out in the underworld of earth. The writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians claims that the dream has become a reality to him. He declares that that which before had not been made known to the sons of men has now been wonderfully revealed. To his freed spirit has been granted access into 'the heavenly places;' to him has been disclosed the mystery of the Divine Will, 'the purpose of the ages' and the meaning of the world. And he has been pledged to no secrecy; he longs, yearns to communicate the matter, 'to make all men see,' as through his eyes, 'what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things.'

I. Does faith ask for a sign? It shall be given, and most liberally. A two-fold sign, 'in the heaven above and on the earth beneath:' a sign that may avail for the moments of silent thought and a sign that may be ours, within and around, in the very heart of work and conflict.

And first there is the sign in the heaven above. It is the presentation of an object to thought, a great accomplished fact upon which the mind can fix and steady itself. It is the sign of the Christ risen. He who lived on earth and died, is now by God raised and glorified and set there in man's nature as proof and evidence of the certainty of man's destiny, as well as of the glory which is in store for the Church which is His body. To Him the soul of the Christian may turn as the needle to the pole, and the effect of such a turning will be peace. As often as we can truly 'lift up our hearts unto the Lord' shall we know of a certainty that our redemption is no vain hope, shall we grow in the assurance that in spite of all seeming to the contrary it is moving onward, drawing nigh.

And that is not all. There is the sign in the earth beneath: which is given as the result and so in its turn as the further evidence of that glorification of the Christ. It is the Spirit given. Given to be the 'seal,' and 'the earnest': these are the expressions employed, as you

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will remember, in this Epistle. 'The Spirit of promise,' whose coming is according to promise: yes, and whose presence is itself the pledge and promise of all that the future is to bring. How absolute and habitual was the Apostle's reliance upon the assurance so given will be seen at once by a glance over the pages which contain his words. It is not much to say that every desire, every hope for those whom he is addressing will be found to be intimately bound up in his mind with the hope which he derives from his sense of the ever continued working of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church of Christ. With this strong conviction to support him he feels that he need set no limit to his prayers and expectations: for here is a 'mighty power' which is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all' he or any may 'ask or think.'

If he is bold to believe that the eyes of his readers may be enlightened to see afresh the vision of the possibilities of their calling in Christ Jesus, it is because he can invoke for them the aid of 'a Spirit of wisdom and understanding.' Does he confidently expect to see them raised and lifted into yet more intimate relation with the spiritual sphere? It is because he is sure that there is already at work in them a quickening resurrection-power. Does he further dare to hope to see them knit together into a true and vital fellowship with all the Saints? It is because he is persuaded that there is a 'unity of the Spirit,' a great reconciling influence by which even Jew and Gentile may be brought into the one family of the Father. Or again, is he urging upon them the necessity of a higher moral standard than that of their former heathen state? He points his appeal by recalling to their thoughts the presence of 'the Holy Spirit of God' within their souls. If they are to reach the richest joy of which their nature is capable, he tells them that they must 'be filled with the Spirit.' And he is confident that from 'the Spirit's calm excess' will follow, not any sort of disorder, but the dutiful subjection and mutual subordination of Christian service.

II. Following thus the course of the Epistle we find him attributing no less than six great effects to the working of the Spirit. He is the author of light, of life, of love; that great triad of spiritual forces. It is from Him that there come the purity, gladness, and order which are the visible manifestation of these. And then as if to complete the sevenfold enumeration, it is finally to the same source that he would have the soldiers of Christ to look if they would win the victory in the lifelong conflict with the evil spirit and his host, with all that is at enmity with light and life and love.

For S. Paul, then, the thought, the message of Christianity would have been most incomplete without this third element, this indispensable witness to its truth. For him the great story of the purpose

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of the Father, to be accomplished through the transforming of men into the likeness of the perfection of the Son, would have wanted the most convincing attestation of its truth had it not been possible to appeal to unmistakable signs of the power of the Holy Ghost. Here was the proof that all was not a dream of the fervid imagination. Here was that which could enable him to rejoice in a mission and ministry more exceeding glorious than that of the ancient lawgiver inasmuch as it was a ministry 'not in word only but in power.'

III. It may not be always possible for us to be able accurately to discern and exactly to estimate the significance of that which is passing before our eyes. An age like a world becomes luminous as it recedes into the distance. And yet it is difficult to think that any can fail to recognise some of the great outlines and something of the general character of the movement, of which we form a part. Who that has had ordinary opportunities of observation, and has been at any pains to use them, can doubt that whole portions of the old creed are acquiring for multitudes to-day a new interest and a new meaning?

It may or it may not be true, as the story is often told, that it was a phrase which fell from the lips of a great preacher and was repeated by a statesman, who heard it, in his place in the House of Commons, which set men thinking and speaking in these latter days of 'the Fatherhood of God.' It is most certainly true that this first truth of Christian belief is now a reality and a force, holds a place in our thoughts, finds expression in our literature such as was not the case in the sermons, the religious books, the novels or the newspapers of forty or thirty years ago. The belief in the Heavenly Father is real to vast multitudes to-day; on all sides men hold to it with a most true and most passionate faith. They know that life for them would be intolerable without it.

So again it is equally beyond question that within comparatively recent years attention has been increasingly centred upon the Person of Christ. It is not only that assailants and defenders of revealed religion have seen that everything must ultimately turn upon the question of the historical credibility of the story of the Gospels. Men generally have felt themselves drawn to the study and to the contemplation of that Figure and that Life. Many 'lives' of Christ have been written for popular use. In our own country one of these, so it has been stated, passed through no less than seventeen editions in a single year, so great was the demand for it. Yes, men and women to-day want to hear about Jesus Christ, and will listen with very grateful attention to any one who will speak to them simply and naturally of Him. No doubt it may be said that so far it is towards the presentation of the earthly life and ministry of our Lord as given

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by the Evangelists that the thoughts of the many are most readily directed; but in days when the watchwords sounding from all sides are such as witness to a growing sense of the larger, fuller life of man, it is not wonderful that there should be a growing power of appreciating those high mysterious truths of the relations of Christ to man, and of men in Christ, which form the subject of so much of the teaching of the later writings of the New Testament.

If these things are so: if we may believe that in a remarkable way we have been learning to repeat afresh and to say with deeper meaning the first and second articles of the Creed, then indeed we may see a reason which will help to explain to us why the great third article of which we have been thinking to-day has not occupied a larger share of the general attention. Then too we may take courage to say that the day is not far distant when this shall be otherwise; that the time is at hand when preachers shall speak with a fuller knowledge, and congregations shall listen with greatly increased understanding of the working of the Holy Ghost?

And may it not be that in the midst of all our social problems we are even now being led on from a too exclusive regard to the individual, to learn, often with great difficulty and perplexity, the principles and the laws which underlie the life of society; and that so we are being trained to grasp more intelligently what can be known of the operation of that Spirit whose special office and function it is to exhibit and perfect the life of fellowship in the members of a corporate body?

Thus then, while we dare not deny that there is abundant room for confession of unfaithfulness and shortcoming on the part of those to whom many opportunities have been given, on the other hand we shall be sadly wanting in faith and gratitude if we do not see very much indeed to inspire us with hope. It may even be that there are those here to whom it will be given to do much to furnish the guidance for which not a few are inquiring already, and for which many more, we may be assured, will be asking soon.

A. W. ROBINSON.

Religious Expansion.

That ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. EPHESIANS iii. 18.

THE religious expansion over the breadth and length of humanity, is it not, if we consider it, simply a type and leading element in the general expansion which is so obviously a characteristic of England in this Victorian era?

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I. There has been the visible expansion of dominion, sometimes ambitiously sought, oftener reluctantly accepted as apparently inevitable, mainly, I suppose, through the responsibilities of our ever-advancing Indian Empire, and through the natural development of Colonial life and power, such as now the annexation of Burmah, now the assumption of sovereignty in Zululand, now the protectorate of New Guinea. It has added, men tell us, since 1837 some seven million of square miles to British territory. In America, as I learn, in Australasia, as I know, it has created new communities almost national in their type, in what was either an entire desolation or a thinly peopled savage country. And yet all the while the home population swells with an almost excessive rapidity. The swarms fly continually away, yet the hive is full and large as ever. Men ask with anxiety, as, like the Fate of some Greek tragedy, this destiny moves irresistibly on, Where will this stop? How shall this vast and scattered Empire be held together? What federation shall ward off the otherwise inevitable disruption? What central energy can be strong enough to circulate warm life-blood through these far-reaching lands? Yet this growth never seems to cease, and some great purpose it must have under the Providence of God.

But even its rapidity of expansion is outstripped by the yet swifter expansion of British commerce, and of the enterprise of British discovery, always opening out to us new fields of influence, always extending our knowledge and dominion over the earth and its inexhaustible treasures, always creating and using those means of rapid intercommunication which bring distant lands into a virtual nearness and an almost instantaneous interchange of thought. It is an expansion which is at once a result and an education of courage, enterprise, energy, even sacrifice, which often put to shame those who are the missionaries of higher and holier causes. We only realise it adequately when we sail homeward from the other end of the world, and at every halting-place rest under British dominion, and recognise on every sea and in every harbour the predominance of the British merchant flag. Nor is it wholly material, for it brings necessarily expansiveness of knowledge and idea, before which old barriers of prejudice or exclusiveness are first undermined and then swept away. It cements the unity of mankind by the lower ties of mutual interest and mutual needs, and should subserve—and historically it often has subserved—the growth of the higher moral ties of true brotherhood.

II. Then, in close relation to these actual expansions, there has grown up naturally what may be perhaps better described as diffusion through the great mass of men of the common treasures of their humanity. This last half century has been in this sense also

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pre-eminently an era of enlargement, gradually or swiftly removing limitations, material, social, political, created artificially by law or privilege. There has been, all painful exceptions notwithstanding, a great diffusion through the community at large of material comfort, and with it of some measure of refinement and culture. There has been, in spite of the awful contrast of the extremes of wealth and poverty, which startles one more forcibly than ever on revisiting, after years of absence, the vast multitudinousness of London, a larger diffusion on the whole of wealth, and a steady advance of the wages of labour of all kinds; far greater, I may add, in the lesser New Englands abroad than in the great Old England at home. There has been a still greater diffusion of political power, and an advance along the whole line of democracy; again far more decided in the Colonies, which represent more distinctly the cruder advances of our English civilisation, as the old country its consolidation and perfection. And with this, as was indeed essential, there has been a diffusion of knowledge, the creation here and in the daughter colonies of a complete scheme of popular education, the swift growth of a popular press, and a prolific popular literature, the wider extension over the length and breadth of England of scientific knowledge, of University teaching, of the educating power of art, especially of the music which is the poetry of the people. Even moral and religious agencies assume every day more of a diffusive character, appealing to the public opinion and judgment, relying on the combined service of the many. Even the Church herself here at home, and far more completely in her Colonial offshoots, feels the diffusive force of the democratic wave, and recognises more clearly the inherent powers and duties of the whole body.

III. Nor is this all. Inseparably connected with these is a higher expansion yet of idea, an enlargement both of mind and heart. We look to the domain of science and philosophy; we are struck at once with a twofold expansion; an increasing division of labour, in virtue of which rapid special advance is made at an infinite number of points; and coexisting with this, and in some sense corrective of it, a sweeping boldness of generalisation, insisting on the correlation of various sciences, on the evolution from one germ of various graduated forms of being and truth, on the provisional acceptance at least of great theories, bringing together in unity the growing variety of discovered facts. We turn to the more direct study of humanity in the history, the language, the literature of the world; the same phenomenon is reproduced. Everywhere the increased variety of special study; everywhere the breaking down of old lines of demarcation by a greater comprehensiveness of idea, combining all studies, historical, archæological, linguistic, literary, in mutual influence as

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elements of a great whole, connecting more and more the story thus told of man with the story of the universe, the study of the soul with the study of its environments of body and of circumstance. Nay, in theology itself, how great has been this same expansiveness of thought and method; in the Biblical criticism, which, in its present shape is the creation of this half century or less, in the wider study of the great religions of the world in relation to our own Christianity, in the conviction that the supreme truth and power of the gospel of Christ must in some way allow for, and harmonise with themselves, all the truths discovered by men, all the forces which sway humanity. Nor have these expansions been, for indeed they could not be, merely intellectual. There has grown up, with them and through them, an enlargement of heart, a wider sympathy, between classes and schools of thought among ourselves: a more candid and generous appreciation of foreign nations, and even of the weaker races of the world; a stronger sense of a duty to humanity, higher and larger than even patriotism to our country; a deeper conviction of a brotherhood underlying the wretched divisions of the kingdom of God. Hard, I know, is the battle which this growth has to wage against the stunting and disintegrating forces, apt to be strongest in the strongest earnestness, the forces of selfishness, class narrowness, sectarianism in all its forms. But look back, as we look back to-day, and who can doubt that it has advanced already or fail to augur for it a yet greater advance in the future?

IV. But while we do thank God for that enlargement which He has so abundantly given us, we must not so fill our minds with it as to forget the need which that very enlargement makes at once greater and more difficult of satisfaction—the need of the less easy, the less obvious, extension in depth and length. In some past ages, as has been well said, the area of thought and faith was narrow, but men would not rest till they based it on the ultimate foundation, and then soared above it to the heaven itself; in our days the tendency is to delight excessively in the visible greatness of superficial expansion, to trust to this as a substitute for solidity, to be so content with its nearer glories as hardly ever to look up. Is it not ominously characteristic that much popular philosophy and literature tend in one way or another to be agnostic, contentedly indifferent to all thoughts of what, according as we take it, may be viewed as the ultimate source of all being, or the supreme perfection up to which all being is drawn; in thought describing as the only positive science the knowledge of that which actually and visibly is, in morality seeking to find a basis for the world in the world itself, in religion acquiescing in a vague bewildered consciousness of some Being unknown and unknowable. Even among those who shrink instinctively from this

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extreme form of what calls itself the spirit of the age, is there not at least liability to that tendency which underlies it, impatient of the work down towards the depth which makes no show on the surface, and of the struggle upwards to the height which seems to us cold and silent and very far away?

Must we not sometimes fear lest in the rapid expansion of our Church over the world there should be some danger of its being founded less deeply than at home now, or in the slower extension abroad of days gone by, and of its acquiescence in a lower standard of thought and life, Church organisation and Church spirit? In the pressing necessity of extension we are tempted to live, spiritually as well as temporally, from hand to mouth. It takes time, no doubt, for the new plant to strike its root deep, to grow to its stately height to bear its fullest and most perfect fruit. Half a century cannot do the work for which ages of antiquity have been needed. The newly-built church of to-day cannot be like the old cathedral, which is a long history of the past in stone. It is obvious that we must be patient, not seeking hurriedly to stimulate a mere exotic and artificial growth; but we must not turn patience into an acquiescence in acknowledged imperfection. Depth of root we need in the special soil, whatever it be, in which each Church is planted, bearing the fruit of a large independence and self-reliance, thoroughly compatible as our civil experience tells us, with close home attachment, and of thorough solidity with the Mother Church. Resolution we need, no less to pursue, however humbly and patiently, the highest ideal of what a Church should be in thought and moral culture, in unity of action and spirituality of life, in the firm grasp of the old faith, and the right daring of new developments to meet new needs. Without these the Church expansion in which we delight may have its imposing breadth and length, but it will have no solid strength to stand against the blast or the earthquake; it will wield no power to exalt and to perfect humanity.


BISHOP BARRY.

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III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Divine Compassion.

When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her. S. LUKE vii. 13.

I.  T were vain to inquire why human nature requires sympathy; we can only appeal to experience, and we find it to be so. And let the compassionate see in the conduct of their Lord, and in the perfect example of compassion which He sets before us, how they ought always to act in their compassion for a friend. Though full of the deepest feeling, how calm the blessed Jesus stands before the bier of the young man, the only son of a widowed mother. What we require in a friend is not the mere verbal expression of sympathy, or what the cold world, in complimentary language, calls condolence; but with the sympathy we look also for the advice and suggestions of which we are conscious, our minds being paralysed the while with grief, that we stand so greatly in need.

II. Grief is not sin. The sin consists only in the excess of grief; and grief is excessive when it incapacitates us for the duties of our station, or leads us to distrust of our God. This in truth is the struggle of human nature, during the threescore years and ten of its trial—to bring the human will into subjection to the divine. The question is not as to the amount of pain and grief which it may cost us to obey; but whether, notwithstanding the pain and grief, we are ready to submit, and from our trust in God's goodness, through faith to acquiesce with thankfulness in the dispensations of Providence, however painful they may prove to be. When God takes away the friend of our bosom, or the child of our affection, He does not call upon us to rejoice; but He simply requires us to be resigned—that is, submissively to yield what God requires of us under the conviction suggested by faith, that it is best that so it should be. There is no sin in praying, 'Father, let this cup pass from me,' for so prayed our sinless Lord; but there would be sin in failing to say, 'Father, not my will but Thine be done,' when the will of the Father that the cup should not pass from us, is declared.


W. F. HOOK.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Strength the Product of Joy.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

I. ET us turn for a moment or two to the words of our text, and see if we can learn from them for ourselves something of what real joy is in regard to spiritual experience. First of all there is a time, as Ezra taught, to be cast down with godly sorrow, and there is a time to be uplifted with holy joy, and the second of these is always the fruit of the first. No heart was really ever moved with godly sorrow that did not in God's good time come to holy joy, and no heart ever came to holy joy that had not first been moved with godly sorrow. We cannot tell what God's time is in dealing with individual souls. Sometimes the clouds hang long over the believer's heart, and he is tempted to doubt whether the day of joy will ever dawn upon him at all, but at such a time let him remember God's word by His prophet, 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' The joy is sure if the sorrow is real. If the heart is truly moved with the thought of its own offence against God—not only moved because it has injured itself or lost its good name in the sight of its neighbours, but because it has offended against a holy God—it will come to holy joy in God's time. We cannot tell what that time is, for His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways. It may be that the night of sorrow will endure until the dawn of the perfect day, and that the morning which brings the true fulness of joy will be the morning of the resurrection.

II. Yet we may do much for ourselves to hasten our own time of joy, and this is what I should like to say a word or two about—how we may get this joy of the Lord for ourselves, and what good it would do for us if we got it.

III. First of all, its coming may be hastened in our hearts by looking more to Jesus and less to ourselves. It is the great defect in the spiritual life of many of us that we are looking too much into the blackness of our own hearts, and looking too little up into the sweet brightness of the face of Jesus. When you feel the clouds of sorrow pressing heavily upon you, when the thought of all your sins seems crushing, try to look away from yourself and look up into the face of

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the Crucified. Forget yourself and think of Him. Gaze upon Him till His very image becomes as it were imprinted upon your soul, and as you think of Him and read of all His amazing love as it was revealed to you in the Cross on Calvary, surely the joy of the Lord will begin to dawn in your soul. You will not forget the blackness of your own sin against God, the depth of your own unworthiness, but through the darkness of that night itself will begin to shine the brightness of the love of God, and you will taste and know for yourselves what the joy of the Lord is.

And, again, you may deepen this joy or hasten its coming by more thanksgiving in your approaches to the throne of grace. Many of us who are very real in going to God in our prayer are very neglectful, very restrained in our thanks to Him; and many a time if you would kneel down before God and just try to count up all that God has done for us, beginning if you will with what is nearest and simplest to you, your daily blessings, the blessings of your past life, the blessings of yesterday—reckoning them all up—if you will think of others about you, and how different your lot is from theirs, if you think of what you might have been, of what you deserve to be, and then thank God for all, surely the sun will begin to shine even into the darkness of night.

But, above all, thank God for Jesus Christ. Thank Him that He spared not even His own Son, but gave Him up to die for you, and surely if the sense of His love to you in Jesus has any hold upon your heart at all it will lead you to rejoice in God your Saviour. Seek then, the joy of the Lord. It is a blessing God longs to give you. He is holding out His hand to give it to you, and it is only through want of faith that many of you are not enjoying it. You will not take it from God simply as a gift, but would rather work it out for yourselves. Take it from God's hand as God freely offers it to you in Jesus Christ. Ask Him by the Holy Spirit to teach you to feel the love of Jesus, and then you will know the joy of the Lord; and when you have known it, you will know the meaning of our text, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

ARCHBISHOP MACLAGAN.

Christian Gladness.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

LET us look for a minute at Christian gladness, not as a mere source of pleasure, but as a source of spiritual strength. It has been well remarked that even cheerfulness of animal spirits is of great aid to virtuousness; that an amiable and lively disposition

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enables a man to rise above his trouble with a readier ease. This is undoubtedly true; and so there are certain temptations to which a joyous temperament is at once a bar. For example, hardness in judging others, malice, pride, can scarcely co-exist with brightness and cheerfulness of heart; contrariwise, gloom and despondency are direct avenues to the tempter, predisposing to doubt and to despair. Many temptations at once flee away, when cheerfulness is enjoyed within. The power of exertion revives after sorrow from the habit of looking at the brighter side. But there is one especial way in which gladness in God is essentially strength. What, it may be sometimes asked, what is to be the uneducated man's guard against unbelief? You may suggest to the men of leisure, to the men of research, many reasonings for the hope that is in them; but the *book* evidences of the gospel are so much the accumulation of many thoughts that no one single argument at all represents the strong position of God's truth. It is probable that many of you, when arguing with an unbeliever, have felt this. You would have given anything if you could have forthcoming some reply which would at once refute his objections. No such single short reply exists. The evidences of Christianity are not one, but they are essentially accumulative. The more a man reads, the more he reflects upon the world's discipline, the more impregnable stands out the truth of God. But then you cannot say to an uneducated man, or a man whose every hour is filled up with earning his daily bread, you cannot send him to these recondite sources of conviction, you cannot refer him back to the witnesses of centuries. What, then, shall garrison his soul against the poisoned infidel tract? I reply, 'The joy of the Lord,' that lightening of the heart, the secret complacency with which no stranger intermeddles, which he consciously gathers from the practice of the commandments of Christianity, and from the resting in the doctrines of Christianity. Nay, 'the joy of the Lord' involves more than this; it comprehends also the pleasure which is derivable from religious exercises, and it disposes a man to recoil from those who would take a positive enjoyment out of his life. Teach that man to find a happiness in his Sundays, a gladness in the going up to the house of God, knitting the pleasures of his life with the mysteries of his faith, and the wave of unbelief will only break itself upon him. It is when you separate pleasure and duty, which God has never separated; giving to the things of time all the bright colours, and to the things of eternity all the dark; calling men away from what they like, to pay the debt of a dull, forced, uninterested homage to God, instead of making the rendering such homage in itself a delight—it is then that you create a temptation to the unbelief which comes in secondly to justify such withholding.

BISHOP WOODFORD.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

King Manasseh's Repentance.

And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God. 2 CHRON. xxxiii. 12, 13.



N considering this repentance of Manasseh, I shall ask you to notice;

I. How it was produced.

1. The agent in Manasseh's repentance was, of course, God, the Holy Ghost. It is His office to convince the world of sin. He it is who sets the sins of the transgressor in battle-array before him, and then breeds within him that true repentance that ends in life. There is no genuine repentance except by the Holy Ghost.

2. But the Holy Ghost uses means. He made use of means in the case of Manasseh. He made use of Manasseh's early education. Manasseh as a boy had been well brought up by his pious father Hezekiah. He had been taught the true and right way to worship the Lord. He had received, no doubt from the prophet Isaiah and other seers, full instruction as to the meaning of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion; and he was taught carefully how the Lord abhorred idolatry. The Holy Spirit brought back to Manasseh's recollection, at the time of his repentance, all those important lessons which he had slighted; and made him feel how aggravated, in consequence, had been his wilful departure from the good and acceptable way, in which he had been in early life instructed.

Parents may, therefore, be encouraged to remember that the truths they have planted in their children's tender minds may germinate and come to fruit in ways they little expect. Hezekiah had long been gathered to his fathers, but the seed he had sown in Manasseh's heart issued in Manasseh's conversion.

3. But, after all, it was his distress which brought Manasseh to repentance. Like the prodigal son 'when he came to himself,' and 'he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God.'

'His prison,' writes good Bishop Hall, 'was now a more happy place for him than his palace; Babylon a better place than Jerusalem. What fools,' the Bishop adds, 'are we to frown on our afflictions!'

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These, how severe soever, are our best friends. They are not indeed for our present pleasure, but they are for our lasting profit.'

II. How his repentance was evidenced.

It was evidenced, first of all, by—

1. Deep humiliation.

2. Fervent prayer.

3. Sincere reformation.

III. How it was regarded.

1. It was viewed by God with favour.

2. It was followed with temporal blessings.

See how large these temporal blessings were. God was entreated of Manasseh and heard his supplication, and 'brought him again to his kingdom.' He not only brought him out of his dungeon at Babylon, but also set him again upon his throne in Jerusalem. And in that city (Jerusalem) he was so prosperous that he was able to repair it, to fortify it, and to build a wall round about it.

But Manasseh's repentance was more blessed still. It was followed not only with temporal blessings,

3. It was also followed with spiritual blessings.

'Manasseh, after he had humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, knew that the Lord He was God,' able to punish, and able to deliver. He was taught the true God, and the right method of worshipping God. He saw that there could be no acceptance for him but through the atoning blood of Christ. And therefore it was 'he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings.' He believed in Christ, and found in Christ all the consolation that he required; and after a happy and useful reign for the remainder of his days, he went to be with the Saviour whose Blood had washed away his crimson guilt.

C. CLAYTON.

The Fall and the Rising.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. S. JOHN xxii. 61, 62.

I. **T**HE sleep of the soul, or its condition before the sin, may be briefly described as a state of security. Not of safety, but of security; that is, of supposed safety, of imagined strength. When our Lord, at the Last Supper, so mercifully warned His disciples of the approach of danger, it was Peter, you remember, who repelled the warning by an eager assertion of his own resolution and constancy. He spoke earnestly, but he scarcely spoke humbly. He knew that he had love, and he knew that he had zeal, and he thought

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those two things must suffice for constancy. He made no allowance for altered circumstances. He remembered not how differently things appear in prospect, while they are at a distance, and in experience, when they are close upon us. And, therefore, however sincerely, and he was entirely sincere, he yet spoke ignorantly, rashly, in that spirit of self-confidence which is always utter weakness. And our Lord answered yet once more, and said to him, 'I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt deny that thou knowest Me.' Peter was silenced, but he was not convinced. His Master had spoken plainly, but he still thought that he knew better.

The same sort of security, of self-reliance, of false confidence, is our chief bane also. Even Christian people are liable to it. Even persons who call themselves miserable sinners, and say in their prayers, 'the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall,' are exposed to the same peril; the peril of self-confidence, of relying upon their good intentions, good resolutions, or good principles, and of forgetting the solemn charge given to us all by our Master Himself, 'Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

II. We turn now to the temptation and to the sin. We have seen the condition of him who is about to enter into temptation: now let us mark the sort of disguise under which the offence comes. The disciple had already had a warning of the truth of his Master's words. He had not found it quite so easy as he had expected, to be firm and resolute.

The narrative before us not only represents the sudden and unexpected manner in which all temptation assails us, but, as it shows us a glass, the likeness and the very image of a whole class of temptations to which we are all exposed; those, namely, which derive their power from our sensitiveness to the opinion of others; from our dislike of being singular; from our desire to stand well with our neighbours, both in what we do, and in what we do not.

III. In the case before us, the prayer of Jesus, though it prevented not the fall, yet secured the rising. 'When thou art converted,' is said of one who shall first have wandered. The faith shall fail, but not utterly, and not finally. Scarcely had Peter uttered the third denial, with all its sad and grievous aggravations, than that sound was heard, which his Lord's prediction had connected with the sin: 'immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew,' and, at the same moment, his Lord, standing before His judges, exposed to every sort of insult and mockery, yet retaining amidst His sufferings the same care for His disciples which He had ever manifested, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Not a word was spoken, or could have been heard amidst the uproar then ringing through the palace: but no

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word was needed : that look, such as we can picture it, full of sorrow, full of pity, full of tenderness, recalled the sinner instantly to himself, and brought after it such a flood of grief, of self-reproach, and of misery, that he could hide his feeling no longer, but straightway went out, and wept bitterly. There, in that anguish, he is left by the Evangelists, until they have to tell how, on the morning of the Resurrection, he was one of the first to run to the sepulchre ; one of the first to whom Jesus showed Himself risen ; and how he who had so lately thrice denied, was invited by his forgiving Master thrice to declare that he loved Him, and invested afresh, and in express terms, with that apostolic commission which he might seem for ever to have forfeited.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Death attacks

Young and Old. DEATH knocks at the door of the old man, he sets traps in the way of the young man.

S. LUKE vii. 12.

Tribulation. As threshing separates the corn from the chaff (*tribulo*), so does affliction purify virtue.

EPH. iii. 13.

Tribulation and Consolation. BE thou a bearer of His Cross, as well as a lover of His kingdom. Suffer tribulation for Him, or from Him, with the same spirit that thou receivest consolation.

1 S. PET. iv. 1.

Miracles. THERE have been surprising coincidences in modern times between the wonderful in nature and the wonderful in history ; for example, between the sailing of the invincible Spanish Armada and the storm which strewn the shores of Great Britain with its ponderous wrecks ; between the march of Napoleon's army and the winter's snow which blinded, benumbed, and destroyed so many thousands, the connection is unexplained except on the principle of a Divine Providence.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.


Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS IV. 1-6.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE XIV. 1-11.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	JEREMIAH V.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	JEREMIAH XXII. or XXXV.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Unity of the Church.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. EPHESIANS iv. 1-3.

I. HRIST'S promise has been fulfilled. The Church has maintained her life, and has preserved those things which were committed to her trust. She holds out to men now, as at the beginning, her Creeds, her Sacraments, her Scriptures. In every true Churchman's heart burns a desire for unity, which is hardly intelligible to others. In all our discouragements we cling to the idea of

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are not content with isolation; we have no pleasure in independence: a Greek Church, a Roman, an English, does not satisfy our aspirations; we desire to think only of 'the holy Church throughout the world.' 'O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.' But how are we to attain that for which we yearn? We are confronted by a state of things which seems utterly inconsistent with it. The two

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largest portions of the Church, which we sometimes call Greek and Latin, are at open war. We ourselves are disowned by both. To say nothing of communities to be found in Armenia, in Assyria, in Egypt and Abyssinia, which broke away from the Church in times of ancient controversies, but still retain the primitive constitution, and the Sacraments, and the Scriptures, and in great measure the Creed of the Church, we see a multitude of modern communities which are called Christian churches, but set for the most part little store by the organisation, the Creeds, or the Sacraments which have come down to us from the Apostles. I say nothing of the rivalry of these communities with each other, or of the bitterness which they often display towards those parts of the historical Church with which they come in contact. We look out upon this prospect and are tempted to despair.

II. Can such a scene of turmoil and confusion be ever exchanged, while the world lasts, for the reign of order and peace? Certain well-known words of our Lord seem to give the fittest answer to this question—‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’ This thought alone can support us in our perplexity. It is the same thought which is our best comfort when we consider the misery in the world around us, to the extent of which our eyes have been opened in this generation more than they were ever opened before. In both cases human ingenuity and power seem quite inadequate to the task of finding a remedy. ‘With God all things are possible.’ Yet God requires of us that we should do what we can. It is not my business to speak of that which we may do to lighten the load of misery in the world. I thank God that men’s thoughts are largely occupied with this subject. My concern to-day is with the unhappy divisions which subsist among the professed disciples of Christ. He Himself prayed that they all might be one. What can we do to bring this to pass? First, and above all things, we can pray after His example continually and earnestly. But our prayers are a mere mockery if we do not exert ourselves for the attainment of the object for which we pray. The circumstances of our own times and our own personal insignificance make it impossible for us to do anything on a large scale for the restoration of unity throughout the world, or even in our own nation. Yet the most insignificant of us can contribute something towards that great end, if in his own place and sphere he follows after the things which make for peace. Each man of us, without surrendering one article of the faith which he has received, can abstain from passionate invective against others and from needless controversy. S. Paul’s letters contain many warnings against the temper which forms parties and divides the Church. His warnings have a special application to the circumstances of our own

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time. They teach us what we ought to do, but they teach us also not to despair. The Church was not shipwrecked in the first century by the perverseness of her children. We may hope that a like perverseness will not shipwreck the Church of England now. The disputes and confusions which seem so threatening may yet, by God's mercy, give place to unity. The promise, it is true, which Christ made that the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church was made to the Church as a whole. We cannot rest upon it as a guarantee for the permanence of the Church in any one country. But His presence is with His Church everywhere, to deliver all who call upon Him faithfully. Only we must strive ourselves, by all lawful means, for that unity which we ask of Him. We must contend earnestly, no doubt, for the faith once delivered to the saints; but we must not confound with that faith private opinions and party cries, nor in our most earnest contention must we forget the law of love.

ARCHDEACON PALMER.

St. Paul's Epitome.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. EPHESIANS IV. 4-6.

I. THE text, from to-day's epistle, is an epitome of the Epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle S. Paul appears to rise even above himself in loftiness of aspiration and breadth of comprehension. There is nothing in it from the commencement to the close to mar the harmony of the whole. There are no details of Church administration to discuss, no abuses to be rebuked, no schisms to be reconciled, no perilous false doctrines to be refuted. There is throughout one majestic development of a majestic conception, conveyed in language befitting the sublimity of the theme. S. Paul appears to have been more overpowered by the dignity, more completely enlightened respecting the nature of his Apostolic office, when writing this epistle, than at any other period of his ministry. In the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Saviour, as he now apprehended them, he appears to have attained to an insight into the purposes of God and the destiny of man which he had never possessed before. How that in the fulness of time God might gather together in one all things in Christ; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ. In the mystery of Christ made manifest in the Flesh he beholds, not one nation, or tribe, or family, not prophets, saints, and martyrs, but the whole human race invested with a new dignity,

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proclaimed as the special objects of divine care, even made partakers of the Divine nature. The Resurrection from the grave was a witness of the triumph of this humanity over the bondage of physical infirmity. The Ascension into heaven was a witness to its still more glorious triumph over the degradation and corruption of sin. To this perfect revelation now made in the fulness of time all partial revelations had pointed, and in it all were merged, and received their fulfilment. To the Jew had been revealed the knowledge of the Divine Unity—a God reigning supreme alike over the powers of nature and the hearts of men. And in the possession of this knowledge the Jew had reached a spiritual elevation above the nations of the earth around him. But there was withal no corresponding sense of the true dignity of humanity. It was not as man, but as a descendant from one man, that the Jew claimed communion with God and sought an access to Him, while the Gentiles in the divided objects of their worship had failed to see how all led up to and were united in one Supreme Being, and how all men were bound together in the ties of one common humanity. In the Gospel as now proclaimed by S. Paul, Jew and Gentile are alike invited to claim an access to God in virtue of their privileges as men. It is the discovery to all of Him who is the living centre of the universe. It is the assertion that all men are related to Him, and that He is interested in all men. It is the breaking down of every wall of partition between man and man, and the proclamation of a fellowship between God and man transcending every race and status, reaching alike to barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, so that in virtue of this common humanity all men are potentially, and all baptized men are actually, one family in the sight of God. There is one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, above all, through all, and in all.

II. If Christianity be indeed the revelation of an eternal order of a truth which cannot be shaken, it will not rely for support upon the goodwill of governments or the favour of classes, and dwindle and disappear when these aids are withdrawn, but rooted in the principles of our nature it will for ever speak with authority to all sorts and conditions of men in all the varying phases of difficulty and doubt. And when its hold upon society is weak and its voice wavering, it will be so only for the want of faithful and courageous utterance. Let us not be afraid or ashamed to set forth the gospel as a power intended to encourage and guide the aspirations of our common humanity. In Christianity we have the clearest as we have also the earliest recognition in the world's history of the value of that humanity, the noblest conceptions of its present dignity and its future destiny. Let us not in faithless disloyalty allow it to degene-

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rate in our hands, to lose its comprehensive character or become the ally of a class or party. This is not the appeal of distrust or unbelief, but of the deepest reverence and most confident hope. It is not the appeal to what is called the spirit of the age, emancipating itself from the claims of authority and antiquity. Still less is it that of a mere devotional sentiment, impatient of systematic teaching, and recognising only the promptings of its own emotions. It is the expression of humble, earnest faith, inviting the theologian to assume his honoured office as the interpreter and proclaimer of God's message to man; believing that our humanity is one, one in community of interest in the present, and one in its connection alike with the future and the past; regarding all partial effort as of value and permanence only in its relation to that 'far-off divine event' when we shall all know and feel that there is indeed one body and one Spirit, one God and Father of all, above us all, through us all, in us all.

H. W. WATSON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Pride and Humility.

When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher. S. LUKE xiv. 10.

- I.  N enunciating this parable our Lord must have had in mind a similar one in the Book of Proverbs. 'Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men. For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.'

Now the Lord, who by His inspiration put these words into the lips of the writer of the Book of Proverbs, must have meant Himself by 'the prince.' He must have meant His coming to render to every one according to his deeds, proud or humble, when He speaks of one being put lower in the presence of the prince. All pride, all self-assertion, is in the presence of a King, the supreme fountain of honour, and with this disposition of mind the Supreme Prince can have no sympathy, for in coming to save us He left the highest place in the universe, the throne, or rather, the bosom of God, and took the lowest room.

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II. The shame of mortified pride does not always follow it in this world. Self-assertion, forwardness, and boasting do not always entail a disgraceful fall upon the man who displays them. Men who are ambitious and self-seeking at times attain to the height of their ambition. But a day is coming when the words with which the parable concludes will be verified in the case of every man. The Judge in that day will remember and humble every act of pride, just as He will remember and reward every act of humility.

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Unsanctified Affliction.

O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. JER. v. 5.



THIS might not unfitly be called one of the lamentations of Jeremiah. The entire chapter contains a vehement expostulation with the Jewish nation for the manifold corruptions and disorders which had shown themselves, both in Church and State; and there had been a threatening to bring upon them yet further calamities by the invasion of the Chaldeans. So universal had this degeneracy of manners become, that the challenge is boldly thrown out at the opening of the chapter, that all Jerusalem shall be searched for one upright man. 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find a man; if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.' But the search is vain. Too well was this known to him who threw out the challenge, for he had observed their deportment under former visitations, had seen how they fretted and chafed as each fresh judgment came upon them, and how, in the midst of all their professed appeals to his sovereignty, saying, 'The Lord liveth,' the worm of rebellion and cherished pride was eating like a canker at the heart; and therefore the prophet exclaims, 'O Lord, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.'

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The words may suggest to us the consideration of a subject more or less belonging to all of us, namely, the danger of unsanctified or unimproved afflictions. We all know what the law of God's household is with regard to chastening, and what misgivings of our spiritual state we may well have, if we pass through life without it. But then we might have chastening, and yet not bring forth the fruit of chastening; might feel the stroke of the rod, and yet not hear the voice of the rod. It was so with the Jews in our text, and the fact suggests a solemn thought, namely, that chastening despised, or chastening resisted, or chastening unblest, cannot leave us in the state in which we were before. That which would profit the soul if used well, must be hurtful to it if used ill. The remedies of heaven cannot be inoperative; they must aggravate the maladies which they are not allowed to heal, and will make the face harder than a rock, if they induce not a tender and softened heart.

Let us proceed to investigate some forms of this unsanctified chastening, as they appear in the several expressions of the text, and then consider how the evil of which it warns us may be kept away.

I. First, with regard to unsanctified or unimproved chastening. The first impression in the text seems to set forth that misuse of it which comes of insensibility. 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.' The language may be taken to describe, not so much the receiving of correction in the spirit of defiant and avowed contempt, as the act of setting lightly by affliction, of not bestowing upon it the attention it deserves, having no reverence for its Author, and no consideration for its design or end. Hence we are open to the truth of the text, whenever the divine chastisement is received by us in a heedless and inconsiderate spirit.

II. But the text adverts to a yet more offending and presumptuous deportment under affliction, namely, when the chastisements of God are received in a stout-hearted, rebellious, defying spirit. Not only have they refused to receive correction, but they have made their faces harder than a rock. In this case, as we see, God is not left out of sight. On the contrary, He is believed and felt to be the Author of all permitted sufferings. The awful impiety is, that He is regarded as the unjust Author. The heart secretly arraigns the wisdom and goodness of His purpose, declaring the utter impossibility of any resulting good, and by a cherished hardihood of spirit threatening to prove the truth of its own convictions. You have a painful picture of this state of men, in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, where Ephraim resisting the divine judgments, is represented as saying in the pride and stoutness of his heart, 'The walls are fallen down, but we will build them up with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will

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will change them into cedars.' Thus the heart is like an anvil; every stroke that God lays upon it only reverberates and returns the blow. It was bad enough when He had smitten us and we did not grieve, when He had consumed us and we refused to receive correction; but now, with awful impiety, we, as it were, dare Him to do His worst; we make our faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

III. But let us consider how these dreadful effects may be prevented, and the chastenings of God turned to a sanctified account.

1. And first we must be careful to acknowledge the design of God in sending our trials, and do all we can to bring that design about. 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved'—plainly showing that God intended them to be grieved; 'Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to return'—a clear intimation that the very purpose of their chastisement was to make them return. Hence our first care should be to see that any chastisement that God sends us is of a truth accomplishing its mission. Afflictions are designed to promote the advancement and improvement of character.


2. Again, in order that chastening may be blessed to us, we must have a care that we do not become weary under it, however long it may continue. If we restrain prayer, and relax effort, and lose confidence, and close up the book of God's promises as not belonging to us; then, though tried in the fire, we shall not be purged by the fire; though chastened, we shall not be blessed: and if the grace of God interpose not, we shall soon become as those who make their faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return.

D. MOORE.

IV. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Use and Abuse of the World.

And they that use this world, as not abusing it. I CORINTHIANS vii. 31.

- I.  HE connections of life. S. Paul says, 'Let those who have wives be as though they had none.' And the principle is of wide application. Let those who have husbands, let those who have parents, let those who have children, let those who have brothers or sisters, let those who have relations and friends, be as though they had none. Let those who use be all as not abusing.

And in what sense? Is there no tie, no close, endearing tie, no tie

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of duty as well as of affection, in all these things? Is the meaning of the Apostle that which would contradict the plainest rules of Scripture and of morality, regard these ties as if they were not binding, as if they were nothing for you? We need not answer that question. The tie of relationship was in S. Paul's eyes one of sacred obligation: he has enforced it in many of his epistles. The tie of marriage was in his eyes so solemn and so indissoluble that on that very account he here urges men to hesitate before they form it in times of peril and of distress. Evidently his meaning is, use, but abuse not. Hold not with too tenacious a grasp that which must soon be dissolved, by death, or by the Advent. Set not your highest affections on any one of these things. See that, however much you love one another, you love Christ, and love God more.

II. Again, in reference to the circumstances of life. S. Paul says, 'Let them that weep be as though they wept not, and those who rejoice as though they rejoiced not.' Joy and sorrow, elation and depression, sunshine and storm, the time to laugh and the time to weep, all are to be as if they were not. The gospel does not say, it is wrong to weep, or it is wrong to rejoice. The gospel does not encourage that dead level of human feeling which never rises into enjoyment, and never sinks into sadness. It only says, 'When you rejoice, let it be as though you did not rejoice; and when you weep, let it be with you as though you wept not.' Use the circumstances of life as not abusing them. That is, use them not with an eager, a grasping, an absorbed and engrossed mind. 'Let them that weep be as though they wept not, and them that rejoice as though they rejoiced not.'

III. Once more, and most obviously, the rule has an application to the possessions of life. And this in all degrees. All men have something; and all men, certainly all working men, whether high or low, are ever gaining something. For all these, therefore, it is written, 'Let those who buy be as though they possessed not.'

God has given us in it much to enjoy. He has given us many common, and He has given us many special blessings. To live at all in this beautiful world, with all its treasures of sight and sound, its things good for food and pleasant to the eyes, its comforts for the body, and its means of information and improvement for the mind, this is enough, this ought to be enough, for any man, both to satisfy desire and to awaken gratitude. Let us not abuse the gift. Let us not use this world greedily; giving ourselves to its enjoyments in excess, intemperately or sinfully. Let us not use it selfishly; catching all for ourselves, and thinking nothing of the wants, in soul and body, of those around us. Let us not use it unthankfully; seizing the gifts, and forgetting the Giver. Let us not use it blindly; having all our attention fixed on the near, the present object, and losing sight

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altogether of the higher and better, the enduring and the heavenly.
In all these ways we may use or we may abuse the world.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

V. ILLUSTRATIONS

Vocation. THAT is not ever the best and fattest which God chooseth,
EPH. iv. 1. but that which God chooseth is ever the fittest.

God never employed any man in His service whom He did not enable to do the work set him.

It is a vain thought to flee from the work that God appoints us, for the sake of finding a greater blessing to our own souls, as if we could choose for ourselves where we shall find the fulness of the Divine Presence, instead of seeking it where alone it is to be found, in loving obedience.

Baptism. WE have no right of inheritance in the spiritual Canaan,
EPH. iv. 4, 5. the Church of God, till we have received the sacrament of our matriculation.

Christ's Baptism. CHRIST was not baptized with any intent to be sanctified by it; but to sanctify the waters, and to convey to them
S. MATT. iii. 14. a power of cleansing our souls.

Baptism a Sacrament of Death. BAPTISM, according to S. Paul, represents to us the death and burial of Christ, binding us thenceforth to die to ourselves and sin, and to live to Him. Hence the sacrament of life is a sacrament of death; it is at once our
ROM. vi 4. cradle and our tomb.

Unity of Christian Faith. BISHOP SELWYN, of New Zealand, would not preach in any place in Polynesia where a mission of another denomination was established, being determined not to occasion
EPH. iv. 1-3. perplexity to the heathen by the sight of differences among Christians which they could not comprehend.

Sabbath. ALTHOUGH a parallel is drawn between the creation of the world by God in six days, and resting upon the seventh, on the one hand, and the labour of man for six days, and his resting on the seventh on the other; the reason for the keeping of the Sabbath is not to be found in this parallel, but in the fact that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because He rested on it. The

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significance of the Sabbath, therefore, is to be found in God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day of the week at the creation, *i.e.* in the fact that after the work of creation was finished, on the seventh day, God blessed and hallowed the created world, filling it with the powers of peace and good belonging to His own blessed rest, and raising it to a participation in the pure light of His holy nature.

THE Sabbath is not an arbitrary appointment of no meaning and significance.

THE rest of the people of God is like the rest of God Himself, a Sabbatism.

GOD did not create man for the greater glory of the Sabbath, but He ordained the Sabbath for the greater welfare of man. Consequently, whenever the welfare of man and the rest of the Sabbath happen to clash, the Sabbath must yield.

THE Sabbath was made for man, *i.e.* for his temporal and eternal benefit. . . . This was its purpose when God instituted it, together with the marriage relation, in the state of man's innocence; and this Christ has restored, as He restored the marriage relation to its original purity. Commentators pass too slightly over this point; and some of them misconstrue Christ's and S. Paul's opposition to the Jewish Sabbatarianism of that age into a violation or abrogation of the fourth commandment.

Christ and ALL that belongs to God belongs to Christ.

God.

EPH. iv.

HE is Lord over all that pertains to the Father. Creator of this universe of worlds (*πάντα*) is God. Mediator of that creation is the Son.

The Son is made the heir of all, that all owes its origin to Him.

HE (Christ) is thus placed out of the category of the created.

It is here indicated that the accomplishment of the creation rests in Him. (All things = the totality of things, the existing universe.)

HE is the end of creation, containing the reason in Himself, why creation is at all, and why it is as it is.

HIS Creatorship excludes creatureship in Him, and the identity of the Creator and Redeemer is so affirmed, that He who became Man is placed more under the idea of 'God' than the idea of 'man,' hence, Theodoret, 'not as having Creation for a sister, but as begotten before all worlds.'

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Lordship of the Sabbath. As the Sabbath must give way before the Temple service, so must Sabbath and Temple service both give way

LUKE vi. before something greater, viz., the Son of Man. If the day of rest and glorifying God must yield even to the rational inhabitant of earth, how much more might the Son of Man, the Redeemer, and the Ideal of mankind, have dominion over the Sabbath-service. The true Sabbath-breakers were those who would sacrifice man to the Sabbath.

THE Son of Man, inasmuch as he is the Head of the race, has a right to dispose of this institution. He is raised above it, as a means of education. He may therefore modify, or abolish it altogether, if He thinks fit.

THE emphasis rests on the word 'Lord,' which accordingly is placed first in the original (*Κύριος γάρ*, etc.), the *γάρ* = that the disciples were blameless. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, as being Himself the Divine Rest and the Divine Celebration, He is both the principal and the object of the Sabbath; He rests in God, and God in Him; hence He is the Mediator of proper Sabbath-observance, and the interpreter of the Sabbath law.

MAN, like God, is to work and rest: thus human life is to be a copy of the Divine life.

WORKS of moral activity: the essential characteristics of these *ἔργα* (Heb. iv.), from which man rests in God, consist in conflicts with moral evil.

THE creation and destination of man to be in God's image, contains the ground of the fact, that man can find rest only in God.

THE reason of the seventh day: The soul of man was to form itself on the model of the Spirit of God.

EVERY Sabbath is a beckoning to the rest of God, and an attestation of it.

THE Sabbath foreshadows things: modifications of the form, and reason for the institution would come, but not its abolition. It will cease only when man attains the perfect stature of the Son of Man. The Sabbath will retain a certain measure of its force as long as this earthly economy endures.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, I CORINTHIANS I. 4-8.
GOSPEL, S. MATTHEW XXII. 34-46.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, . JEREMIAH XXXVI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, . EZEKIEL II. or EZEKIEL XIII. to
VER. 17.
SECOND LESSONS, . . . ORDINARY.

I. SERMON ON THE EPISTLE

The Christian Idea of the Unseen.

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit. 1 CORINTHIANS ii. 9, 10.



WE belong to two worlds—the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the Eternal—indissolubly united, unceasingly affecting one another, tending gradually to regain in a tenfold consummation through the work of Christ that unity which they have in the sight of God. We may throw ourselves, with all our energies, into the pleasures of the day; we may use every power and gift which we have received, for transitory ends; we may fill our time with distractions which leave no opportunity for reflection; but none the less in all this we are subject, against our will it may be, to forces of an invisible order. There is another side to every act of self-indulgence and neglect, of pride and arrogance, of oppression and unkindness, of forgetfulness

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of God and man, and through such acts we fashion inevitably the character which endures for ever. Or, again, we may fix our eyes on a far-off heaven and lose ourselves, as we suppose, in thoughts of God and the soul; but none the less we shall find that we cannot escape from the present; we shall be constrained to confess that we are not able to realise the glory of the Unseen, otherwise than as it is reflected from the things of earth; and that it is only as we use earthly things that we become capable of seeing the eternal things which they signify. Thus the conviction is forced upon us by actual experience that we belong to two worlds. But though we may hide from ourselves and hide from others thoughts which we are too indolent or too fearful to entertain, the fact still stands in its august magnificence, ready to make itself felt in some season of calm or trouble. Life may at first seem to be clear and bright like the day, full and complete with its chequered beauty of light and shade; but as the years go on we remember that, like the day, it is born of the darkness and dies into the darkness; and, more than this, we come to know that that darkness, like the inimitable star-lit spaces of the sky, reveals to us depths of God which we could not otherwise comprehend. For it was, I suppose, under the clear night that we first learned how little we are and how great we are; and so it is in the prospect of that vaster and more awful night by which our time of labour is closed in that we learn to recognise the meaning and possibilities of life. In itself, indeed, the darkness can give no sign; but Scripture throws just that light upon it which makes the mysteries of past and future radiant with encouragement no less than with wisdom. It frees us from the tyranny of material causation; it shows us that that which we necessarily speak of as the future is the manifestation of that which is; it guards us from endeavouring to give substance to the unseen by crowding into it things which 'eye hath seen and ear heard'; it presents the Eternal, not as the endless extension of time, but as the opposite of time, and forbids us to think of our transformation into the likeness of Christ as the result of any physical process; it reveals to us the 'things which God prepared for them that love Him,' things which enter not into the heart of man, even fellowship with Him in Christ, fellowship with man in Him, fellowship in man with all creation—that peace passing knowledge which is the fulness of harmonious energy, when God shall be all in all. We belong, then, I repeat, to two worlds, which are, in very truth, one world. We cannot escape from this necessity of our constitution; but our joy and our strength, our confidence and our inspiration is to know that we do belong to both.

I. I wish, therefore, to suggest only two thoughts on the relation of the Unseen to the Seen. I wish to point out how the Seen is for us the revelation of the Unseen, and how the Seen is also the sphere in

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which the Unseen must be realised by us. The Seen, the present, is for each one of us the revelation of the Unseen, the Eternal. In quieter moments we all look forward to the future, and perhaps we ask, 'Where shall I go hereafter? Shall I be happy?' when we ought rather to ask, 'Where am I now? What is my idea of happiness?' Happiness, we can see at once, involves a harmony between a man's capacities and desires and his environment. If his circumstances are in conflict with his desires, or if his desires are unable to realise the harmony which exists, he cannot be happy. The prospect which thrills the trained eye with delight has no meaning for the blind; the purity of a beautiful soul touches the profligate with shame. Now, as Christians, we believe that man was made to know God, and that, in Christ, this knowledge can be gained. Happiness for man, therefore, lies absolutely in conformity to God, and this conformity is in effort, in aim, in inception, in essence, not future, but present. 'This is,' the Lord said, not, 'This will be,' or, 'This leads to,' or, 'This assures,' but, 'This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send.' This is eternal life, sovereign in its conquering power, invincible in its sustaining energy, now while the conflict is to be waged, now while the lesson is to be learned, no less than when we know even as we are known. Holiness is, in other words, the necessary foundation of happiness here and hereafter—now when we see through a mirror in a riddle, and then when we see face to face. The state of grace and the state of glory, it has been said, differ not in nature, but in degree; the divine judgment is not an arbitrary sentence, dependent upon a variable will, but an exhibition of things as they are. Pain is the necessary consequence of sin. God cannot make the bad happy, for that would be to deny Himself. No change of place can change the character; we must carry ourselves wherever we are. It is clear, then, how the present is for us individually the expression of the future, the seen and the unseen, because it is the expression of the Eternal in the terms of human life. We are, indeed, wholly unable to give shape to being in another order, and in this respect the reserve of Scripture is in striking contrast with the boldness of human imaginings. But still we can perceive that when our earthly life ceases we are that which we have become, and that what we are we must be only more completely, more intensely when the veils of earth are withdrawn from the Divine Presence and those distractions which now hinder the concentration of the soul upon the one object which will then occupy its whole field of vision have passed away. What we are we must be hereafter, more completely, more intensely in the face of that perfect righteousness and love, that beauty, and purity of truth which will then be open before us. He who, casting himself on God, has resolutely striven for justice, with imper-

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fect knowledge it may have been, but with a true heart; who has tenderly fostered every germ of sympathy through disappointment and loneliness; who has longed to interpret what he has seen of the inner glories of nature; who has chivalrously sheltered tender souls in temptation and reproach, will, in that all-embracing glory, find every effort crowned with the joy of attainment beyond all hope. That which was begun in God will find its end in Him.

II. And what shall we say, on the other hand, of those who have sought only the praise of men, when they see themselves as God sees them; of those who have triumphed by self-assertion when they find themselves alone in the desolateness of utter bereavement; of those who have sold for fame and gold gifts of insight and vision, gifts of art and eloquence which were meant to be the enjoyment of a people, when they are visited by the torturing host of lost opportunities and feel the purpose and splendour of the inheritance which they have wasted? Can we picture any anguish more terrible and enduring which will then only be able to find relief when it is welcomed as the just chastisement of God? Now, in each case—and it is this upon which I wish to insist—in each case joy or wretchedness follows by inevitable sequence from the action of the same forces of perfect holiness upon different characters. Then devotion finds rest in the loving Father to whom it has consecrated the offering of a chequered life, and selfishness recognises the awful solitude of exile from a righteous Judge who makes Himself felt in an awakened conscience. This is the end, and it is discoverable already in the facts of life. Senses, thoughts, affections for good become naturally fertile in divine consequences which pass all understanding; and, on the other hand, the faculty, unused or misused, grown powerless or distorted, remains to witness against its possessor by its impotence or perversity. The vices of arrogance and pride involve the misery of hopeless humiliation; the vices of self-indulgence create a void of passion which cannot be satisfied. So it is with the hereafter as in the now; so it is that the Seen is when we look calmly into the depths of our souls the revelation of the Unseen, the present, and the eternal. It follows, you will see at once, that the present is not only the revelation of the eternal towards which we look, but also the sphere in which we must realise the eternal which we hold. The Unseen which is our future is prepared by the present; the Unseen which is our faith is shown by the present. No reproach has been more frequently brought against Christianity than that it teaches men to disregard the claims of to-day in the contemplation of some distant heaven. So far as the reproach is just, it applies not to our creed, but to the perversion of it. For us, as Christians, our faith is that which is the spring of our life; it brings home to us our immortality, it teaches us that we have already entered

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on the privileges and powers of the future. 'Ye are come,' and not, 'Ye shall come,' unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven.' Ye are fellow-citizens of the household of God, and not 'Ye shall be'; and even now 'We have,' and not simply 'We shall have' hereafter, 'a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Just so far, then, as we use this spiritual endowment which is given us, we shall use it with the conditions of our outward state. When the Lord bade the Pharisees 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,' He did not, as we commonly suppose, make a division between the obligations of man: He declared their real unity. He is no Christian who can pass by on the other side, busied with his own aims, where humanity lies before him naked and wounded and half dead; he is no Christian who thinks that any part of his daily work lies outside the transforming influence of his Master's presence. Every human action must assume for the Christian fresh importance, and the same principle which enriches his view of life ennobles, as we have seen before, his view of nature. The sense of the Eternal in the present, gives to things transitory a power of meaning for the believer which they cannot otherwise have. God has revealed to him that which 'eye saw not and ear heard not.' For him the 'kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,' and he confidently demands the attributes of its service. He does not look away from the things of earth, but he looks through them to their Maker. Therefore, the Christian, even more surely than the poet, finds in the meanest flower that grows thoughts that often lie too deep for tears, just as he finds in the poorest outcast the throbbings of a brother's pulse. In his estimate of the world he refuses to acquiesce in the surface of things, to disparage the least gift which God has made, to accept the verdict of a barren failure; he knows the conditions of life, the strength of life, and the end of life. 'I saw,' S. John writes, after he had contemplated the Vision of Judgment—'I saw a new heaven and a new earth.' The heaven and the earth are new, and yet they are not like the former new creation. They always have been, but there is not in us the nature, the ability to behold their veiled beauty. But at last the veil shall be drawn aside, and things shall be seen as they are in the sight of God. This consummation the Apostle shadows forth, and shows how the eternal order follows the order of time, being at once its offspring and glory. The old names are used, heaven and earth, that we may know that the two worlds are one; but they are so used that we may feel that they have become symbols for realities which we cannot yet grasp. That which most vividly represents

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change and weariness—the restless waters and the still dark night—is taken away. There is, we read, no more sea, there is no need of the sun there, neither of the moon which were before, for times and for seasons, for days and for years. The present conditions of our life are wholly removed, but we remain. Our powers, our works, our affections—all that we are, all that we have become—is taken up into the new order. Meanwhile, we wait, sure at least of this, that that which shall be is the fulfilment of that which is past, and that nothing that is shall be lost.

BISHOP WESTCOTT.

II. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Morality Dependent upon Religion.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

S. MATTHEW xxii. 40.



THESE two laws—i. e.

1. Duty to God;
2. Duty to man.

Sometimes it has been the temper of the time to lay emphasis upon the first of these.

(E.g. the 'theological' period of seventeenth century.)

Now, the tendency is to exploit the second.

I. Thus has emerged the notion that morality has a basis of its own.

The question asked is, 'Is morality possible apart from religious sanctions?'

1. At first sight it would seem to be so.

The large numbers who are moral; they are just from choice, pure because they loathe lust, generous by instinct, but they refer none of these things to religion.

2. The new scientific basis of morals.

That is: that morality rests ultimately, not upon a commandment of God, but upon the experience of men.

[Conscience, they say, is but inherited utility which has lost her memory and changed her name.—(Martineau.)]

The practical outcome is the widespread feeling that while morality is a bounden obligation, 'religion is a matter of choice.'

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II. What answer shall we make?

1. The fact of a morality existing at any period is not conclusive as to its origin.

It may be a survival of a previous impulse.

(Like the company of a ship at sea who make rules of living, but both their course and their motive power are provided in advance.)

The present existing morality is at least entangled with Christianity.

It is not so easy to de-religionise life as many suppose; not only Creed and Church affect it, but a host of more subtle things.

[There are some ugly indications that morality is already losing its force where it is separated from religion.] In any case it is too soon to see whether or not it can go alone.

2. It leaves many facts unaccounted for.

It cannot make anything of sins of the soul which do not emerge into actions. It cannot make anything of remorse.

‘My sins, my sins, my Saviour, they take such hold on me.’

3. The universal instinct that the consequences of actions pass beyond.

This instinct cannot rest upon experience or observation, for these are mostly to the contrary.

4. It will not endure the *experimentum crucis*.

Take the two theories into the market-place and with them preach righteousness!

[A Unitarian preacher was holding forth in a squalid court in Glasgow urging repentance on the ground of expediency!

‘Eh, sir,’ cried an old virago, ‘your rope’s no lang eneuch for the likes o’ huz!’]

Which will you write over your daughter’s chamber-door, ‘Society never forgives,’ or, ‘Blessed be the pure in heart, for they shall see God’?

Will you say to your son, ‘Thou shalt not be found out,’ or, ‘Thou shalt not steal’?

S. D. M’CONNELL.

The Love of God and Man.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. S. MATTHEW xxii. 37, 38.

I. IF it is hard to believe that such a world as this was made and is ruled by love—at least by love armed with omnipotence—let us not forget that it is harder still to believe the contrary, to tolerate the voice that speaks of man as forlorn and fatherless, as

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born he knows not whence or why, and bound he knows not whither, the outcome and the victim of non-moral forces acting systematically, but incapable of regard for his welfare, and which have no ear into which, after passing through the salutary discipline of trial, sorrow and suffering, man can breathe the acknowledgment, 'Thy loving correction hath made me great.' Heart and brain alike refuse to accept a supposition which contradicts our best and strongest instincts, and which, under the storm and stress of life must for the mass of men mean recklessness and despair. And surely, in weighing the probability or improbability of an opinion, its moral influence may fairly count for something. If of two rival creeds the one inspires courage, buoyancy, self-control, endurance, resignation, hope; and the other means moral paralysis, or else, disguised, perhaps, in subtler and more graceful renderings, the old conclusion, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,'—in such a case does not reason allow us to judge them, in some measure at least, by their fruits? The creed cannot be greatly wrong that plainly tends to make and keep the lives of men right. And, tried by this test, the faith that finds among and in spite of the crookedness and contradictions of the world, the upward footprints of wisdom and love, must surely be preferred.

Again, the love that man has for his fellow-man may serve us as some pledge and proof that there is love on an infinitely grander scale elsewhere. A stream so broad and deep and beautiful surely implies a never-failing, heaven-fed source.

Take human life in its darkest and most degraded forms; study the annals even of outcast misery and hardened vice; mark how the wretched will do deeds of silent, unconscious heroism for the wretched; how from hearts seemingly hard as the nether mill-stone soft and genial drops of sympathy and self-sacrifice will flow; fathom, if you can, the wide and swelling waters of pure affection that roll round the world; see how the tide is steadily rising higher, sweeping away the barriers between man and man, bearing upon its breast a thousand noble enterprises; above all, think of the height attained in the character and career of the Man Christ Jesus; and then ask, whence came this mighty flood, whence came its power of growth, its wisdom of direction, whither does it tend, what is its final destiny? Must there not be some boundless reservoir, some inexhaustible ocean of divine love from which the streams that make the life of man and all things glad and wholesome, are fed, and into which all nature, all humanity, shall some day be gathered? I believe in the love of man, and therefore I believe in the love of God.

II. What are those pregnant hints, those fundamental, indisputable truths of Scripture which in their different ways combine to form

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the larger hope? Take, first, the character of God. And let me ask in passing, has not every true development or reformation of theology been, in its essence, a growth in knowledge of the character—the will, purpose, and methods—of God? God, we are told, is love. Love is a fire; it purifies; it may, it must, consume all that is foul and false, all that is offensive to the perfect holiness of God; its force is endless and unquenchable.

‘The keen sanctity,
Which, with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, must seize,
And scorch, and shrivel’

the sin-stained soul of man, consuming even while it quickens it. There can through all eternity be no terms or truce between the love of a Holy God and the sinner so long or so far as he continues to be sinful. And who shall venture to fix bounds beyond which the needful process of purgation must not pass? Who shall presume to say that for some the fire will not consume utterly and without quickening? But, taking love only on its sterner side—thinking of it only in relation to the dross in human character and conduct—where among its possible processes can we find room for deeds and instruments like those of the torture chamber ‘writ large,’ and endlessly protracted?

Again, God is the God of mercy. ‘His mercy is over all His works.’ ‘His mercy endureth for ever.’ Can that mercy have shrunk to the little measure of this present life? Will the Divine Father’s heart be finally steeled against the prodigal unless within his allotted portion of the threescore years and ten he finds his way home from the far country? At the hour of death does not only man’s state, but God’s nature change?

Again, God is a God of justice, and justice, to speak simply, means fair play. He will judge the world in righteousness, equity, and truth. May we have grace ourselves to live and to help others to live in constant remembrance of that strict and solemn account which we each for himself must one day give before the judgment seat of Christ. The methods, the verdicts, the punishments, the retributions of perfect justice must themselves be exquisitely perfect. Vindictiveness can have no place, but ‘vengeance’—righteous, wholesome vengeance—‘is Mine, saith the Lord.’ The rough-hewn trials and verdicts of this world can be but faint and blurred types of what shall be hereafter. And does it not follow from this attribute of God that our hearts can with humble confidence trust the destiny of the creation to its fair and faithful Creator? ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’

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Again, and to sum up hastily and incompletely what calls for very different treatment—the Bible has clear pointings to a final triumph, to a perfect unity in which God shall be all in all. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem it; His glorious purpose was ‘to sum up all things in Christ’; Christ, lifted up on the Cross, would draw all men unto Himself; in His last agony He urged a plea which in some measure applies to every child of man, ‘Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;’ in the mysterious interval between death and resurrection, He proclaimed the glad tidings to the spirits in prison, who had once been signally doomed for disobedience; to Him, highly exalted, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; through Him will God reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens; the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; the last enemy, death, shall have no more dominion, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; and, as the closing scene of the sublime drama, ‘God shall be all in all.’

BISHOP JAYNE.

A Christian Woman.

Mary hath chosen that good part. S. LUKE x. 42.

I. **F**IRST, we will look at women in the Old Testament. Perhaps the noblest picture of her sphere is given by a person introduced to us as the mother of King Lemuel in the Book of Proverbs. In those eastern countries of which he was an inhabitant it was not easy to find what he describes. The eastern wife had become a slave, she had little or no education, she was seldom allowed outside the walls of her husband’s house, she was not his companion, but his servant. The days of Sarah, and Rebekah, and Rachel, were over. Occasionally a heroine like Miriam, or a tigress like Jezebel or Athaliah would rise into prominence, but the usual path of woman’s life had become monotonous and degraded. Her time was spent within the walls of the harem, and was occupied with childish trivialities, petty quarrels and jealousies, follies of vanity, and the wickedness of mischief and intrigue. Her mind, vacant of all larger and higher interests, became feeble and silly. Added to this, was the wretched fact that she was not even mistress of her own household or of her husband’s heart. Polygamy was allowed. The number of a man’s wives appears to have been only limited by the expense of their maintenance. The eastern lady might have at any moment her nearest and dearest affections and hopes superseded by an interloper.

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Under such a system malice and hatred were the inseparable accompaniments of family life. Bitterness and dissension, the discarded favourite weeping in solitary and helpless anguish, the insolent pride of the new rival, the children ranged in hostile camps—these were the sights that were commonest in an eastern household. It is a picture of degradation and misery, and so the usual state of women at that time in those countries puts additional emphasis on the question of King Lemuel's mother: 'Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies?'

II. That this opinion could not hold good now for a moment is owing to our Lord and to His kingdom. He has restored woman to her true position as man's companion. He has put them on an equality with man in education, in dignity, and importance. The ministering faculties of woman He has exalted, and they have become her chief crown and beauty. She is surrounded with everything that can ennoble her with tenderness and affection, respect, culture, and refinement, with varied interests and wide scope for her most splendid energies.

She who has sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ is meek with His own humility. She is strong, not in herself, but in His strength. Her affections are fixed on things above, not on the excitements of the earth. She has perfect control over all her faculties; her temper, her prejudices, her prepossessions, her likings and dislikings, her whims and caprices, all are subject to the law of God in Christ Jesus. She has consummate tact, taste and perception, because she is not darkened by earthly motives at all, but illuminated in all things by the true light. She never considers whether she is beautiful or not in appearance, so that from within her smiles forth the image of her Lord. To her her dress is of no importance; she does not wish to look singular, but her wishes are attained when nobody notices what she has on. She lays no stress on the outward adornment of plaiting the hair or of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, so that she has the hidden beauty of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. To her her lot in life is of little moment so that she thoroughly fulfils every duty which comes before her as daughter, wife, mother and sister, which is clearly her own business and not another's.

The path of such an one through life is like a river, spreading blessings and happiness wherever it flows, even though it cannot be seen in the landscape, and when she dies it is as when a star falls from the firmament of heaven and leaves behind it a trail of glory.

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR.

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III. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Characteristics of a Faithful Minister.

And thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. EZEKIEL ii. 7.



HE prophet, and all who after him are charged with heaven's messages, are here exhorted to a strict fidelity to the words delivered unto them of God: 'Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.'

This, then, is to be the first care of those who minister in the gospel, that they speak the words of Christ and no other, that they call no man master, and no human dogma infallibly true; but that in all things they keep reverently, humbly, closely to the terms of their high commission: 'But thou, son of man, shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.'

II. But observe, another proof of his ministry which Ezekiel is required to give, is a high and holy superiority to the fear of man: 'And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks.' As I have already hinted, there is nothing in our modern modes of receiving a prophet's message which exactly answers to the treatment here described as received by Ezekiel. Advancing civilisation has produced more courteous reception for the gospel messenger at all events, but I am afraid that is all. The feeling towards the message is the same, it is the fresh truth and the fresh sorrow of yesterday. We say, Few will believe our report, or have the arm of the Lord revealed to them. The pure spiritual truth, as much now as ever, has to force its way through oppositions, and 'Marvel not if the world hate you,' said Christ to His disciples; and to the faithful prophet Ezekiel it was said, that he must expect as the ungrateful requital of his fidelity, 'that thorns should be with him, and he should dwell among scorpions.'

III. But I note a third form of ministerial faithfulness which Ezekiel was required to exhibit, namely, in the full and complete disclosure of the whole counsel of God. Some portions of his message the people

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might be willing enough to hear, but others they would forbear from hearing. He must make no difference, he must speak the Lord's words, and all His words: 'Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.' Moreover, part of the message was sure to be unwelcome to them, for, at the close of it, a roll of a book was given to him, 'and it was written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.'

The lesson to be learned from this part of our subject is, that in the proclamation of the gospel message there must be no keeping back, no handling of the Word deceitfully, no shunning to declare to the people all the counsel of God; 'whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,' we must so deliver our message as that all may know who are they that serve the Lord, and who serve Him not.

Pray for us, that we having spread the roll, this sure word of prophecy, enough for all and something for each, a precept of promises, of encouragement, and comfort, we may wisely distribute the bread of life. So only, as it is afterwards declared to Ezekiel, can we deliver our own souls.

D. MOORE.

IV ILLUSTRATIONS

Riches. I HAVE received from Taubenheim one hundred pieces of gold, and fifty pieces of silver from Schart; so that I begin to fear lest God be giving me my portion here below. But I solemnly declare that nothing can make me happy except God.

1 COR. i. 4.

Riches. THE riches of Christ's Divinity are unsearchable, and the riches of His condescension are unsearchable, and the riches of His tenderness are unsearchable, and the riches of His redeeming love are unsearchable, and the riches of His intercession are unsearchable, and the riches of His faithfulness are unsearchable, and the riches of His supporting grace are unsearchable. These riches will never be expressed, even to all eternity. No; not by the noble army of martyrs, nor the glorious company of the apostles, nor the goodly fellowship of the prophets, nor the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, nor the innumerable company of angels, nor the spirits of just men made perfect, nor by all the ransomed throng of heaven. It will form their most ecstatic employment in heaven. Join, all ye happy throng, . . . join holy Abel and Enoch, upright Job, perfect Noah, souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, grand souls

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of Moses, Samuel, Elijah, pardoned David and Manasseh, soul of Isaiah the prophet. Join, all ye whose souls under the altar cry, 'How long, O Lord, wilt Thou not avenge our blood upon the earth!' Join holy Stephen and Polycarp, holy Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Rowland Taylor, and Anne Askew! Join brave Wycliffe, gallant Luther, stern John Knox, sweet John Bunyan, and praying George Fox; join pious Doddridge, and tuneful Watts, noble George Whitefield, holy Fletcher, exhaustless John Wesley, dauntless Rowland Hill, and grand though lowly Robert Hall. . . . Ye sweetest trebles of the eternal choir, ye million million babes who died without actual sin, join all your notes of praise! Pull out every stop of the grand organ of heaven, from the deep swell diapason to the lofty flute and cornet! Gabriel, strike the loftiest note of thy harp of gold! And let all the host of heaven, angels and men, begin the grand anthem, 'Worthy is the Lamb,' etc. And let the bold fugue be struck, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' And let the eternal Amen peal, and roll, and reverberate through all the arches of heaven! But never through all eternity shall the gathered host be able fully to express 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'!

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS IV. 17-32.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW IX. 1-3.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	EZEKIEL XIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	EZEKIEL XVIII. OR XXIV. VER. 15.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Grieving the Spirit.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. EPHESIANS IV. 30.



THAT the Holy Spirit is a person would be evident from these words, even if there were no other proof; or else how could He be grieved? And it is clear that He is a very kind and tender person; for we never grieve where we are not loved. It is a remarkable name by which S. Paul calls Him, 'the Holy Spirit of God.' And what a kind image is that which those words of our Saviour convey: 'He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you'; for that is very kind teaching, which helps the memory all the time it teaches.

It is a rule of our nature that love is sensitive, and the more affectionate we feel, the more quickly and the more keenly do we receive either pleasure or pain from the objects that we love. Like every other feeling of the mind, this is vitiated with the sin with which it mixes in the human heart. We all know how easily it can run into

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what is weak, and captious, and morbid, and wrong. It is a very difficult thing to be sensitive and not touchy. And, nevertheless, in itself it is not a poor thing that sensitiveness of the affections. It is evident that God the Father has it. The whole multitude of passages which, in compassion to human words, speak of the emotions of the divine mind, all show an infinite susceptibility on the part of God. And the same delicacy of moral touch was exhibited in the Lord Jesus Christ while He was upon the earth. And every Christian, too, as he grows in grace, finds the edge of his feelings grow finer and finer every day.

This feeling, then, the text shows to be a feature of the Holy Ghost, and this is what we wish to impress upon you, that every one of us, as many as have the grace of God, is always carrying within a Spirit, which Spirit is the very life and power of all his peace, and all his strength, and all his obedience. So exquisitely loving and so exceedingly sensitive is this Spirit, that He is affected by everything we say and think; and moved continually, according as we please or harm Him, either to joy or grief.

You must agree with me that this is a matter of practical importance; that if the inference which we draw from the words of S. Paul be correct, that such is the true character of the Spirit with whom we have to do every moment, and on whose continuance with us all our happiness depends, it is of importance whether that Spirit is receiving from us satisfaction or distress. Because, even if we forget for a moment our own self-interest in this matter, does not every principle of honour and gratitude constrain us to do all that we can, not to grieve, but to gratify that mysterious, but real and living Being, whose very temples we are, whose love to us is so exceedingly tender; to whom we owe, as its only Author, all our spiritual life; who has taught us all that we know of God and heaven; who has been, and will be again, our only Comforter in all our sorrows; from whom, as from a fountain, comes every ray of peace and hope that sparkles in our breast; and who only can carry out that fond desire awakened in our bosom; and make us fit for the glory and presence of Jesus Christ?

Now, though the subject is intensely deep, the fact appears to be absolute; that all through this coming week, for instance, whether we are conscious of it or not, we shall be all constantly communicating to that good Spirit some shades of delight or sadness; delight, when He sees godly emotions displayed; sadness, when He sees them slighted.

There are objects in nature, of which the fibres are so finely set, that they vibrate with every breath, and change with every change of atmosphere. But more fine than all are, we believe, the sympathies of the Holy Spirit. And is there not something thrilling in the

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thought that thus we are actually influencing the happiness of Him from whom all happiness flows to us?

To a dutiful child it will be always enough for the father to say, 'My child, you grieve me'; and shall it not be enough for us, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption'?

But here, as in everything, that which is for the glory of God is also for His children's good; and our interest and God's honour are always in the end identical.

See, for a minute, what the Holy Spirit is to you, according to the image which S. Paul is using. He draws his illustrations from a seal.

Some have supposed that this is the idea. When two contracting parties have made their agreement, it is customary to affix a seal to the document which embodies the compact; so when God, having bestowed His free love and favour upon a soul, and that soul believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and becomes reconciled to God, the Holy Spirit immediately occupies that soul. He endows it with certain graces. He imparts to it certain feelings. He forms an image of God there, faint but true. He communicates to it comfortable evidences of its own power and safety. He gives it earnestness of better things to come. And all this is as a seal upon it. It ratifies God's promises; it assures it of God's good-will; it authenticates God's words, and realises the sinner's expectation.

This, doubtless, is a very true and instructive view of the Holy Spirit, as coming in and sealing, by His different offices in the heart, the covenant of our peace. But I do not think that this is exactly the intention of the passage we are considering. The Lord Jesus Christ is, in some sense, the absent, certainly He is the invisible proprietor of the Church, *i.e.* of every believer's soul; and He has done with it, as we often do with very valuable property when we go away and leave it, He has placed it under seal till His return. The seal not only marks it to be His, but guards it also from any wrong or hurt; so that whoever would destroy or injure one of these precious blood-bought pearls of a forgiven soul, must first do that which it is not in the power of men or Satan to do, he must break God's seal.

Happy thought to some of you. You lie still in God's inviolable secrecy under His own seal; and every grace you attain, and every holy confidence you feel, is a strengthening of that seal which fastens you to life eternal. What that seal exactly is, we are not left without definite teaching; for the same Apostle explains it to Timothy when he says, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of

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Christ depart from iniquity.' From which we learn that it has, if I may so speak, two sides, making two impressions, which together complete the spiritual seal. The one, God's own free, eternal, electing grace, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His;' and the other, our own personal progressive holiness of life, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'

That this is the seal of which the Apostle is speaking to the Ephesians is confirmed by those words which he adds, 'Unto the day of redemption;' for, as soon as the redeemed soul shall take its redeemed body, the danger will be all over; the Proprietor Himself will have returned; and He will unseal the casket and take out His jewels, which will then be wanted to make up His crown. In the meantime, though it is certain, as we have seen, that no external power can ever invade the safety of any sealed soul, yet we must understand well, that every time we grieve the Holy Spirit we do tamper with that seal, and thereby weaken it, and whatever weakens that seal does, in fact, take from our closeness to God, lessen our evidences, and shake our salvation; for then there is room, as it were, for sin, and trouble, and fear, and doubt, to come in, and for peace and confidence to go out; whereas, when that seal of grace is strong, it is like the door of glory through which none can go out, and nothing evil, no pain, no sorrow, can ever come in.

Should we not always ask, whenever the mind loses anything of its sense of God's presence, and grows ashamed, or cold, or prayerless, Is not this because the Spirit has been grieved, and are not, therefore, my seals impaired?

Here can you see the paramount importance of guarding your souls by not grieving the Spirit, and the consequent necessity of always bearing in mind the inconceivable sensitiveness, which is the characteristic of that Spirit's nature.

Let me mention just one or two of the many ways in which the Spirit may be grieved.

The Holy Spirit is continually, as with silken threads, or His still small voice drawing the soul, and whispering to it thoughts of good, convictions of sin, aspirations after holiness, pious desires, soft, tender emotions, religious resolutions. These are His kind work in a man's breast. If you resist any of these, if you trifle with any of these, He is grieved; and He will show you that He is, and you will feel it.

Suppose, for instance, you feel an impulse for prayer, and you do not pray. Or, suppose you are impressed that you ought to do something, and you do it not; or you do it, but not at once,—it is the Spirit who spoke, it is the Spirit who has been dishonoured, and the Spirit is grieved.

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Whenever a sacred impression is permitted to die out in the mind, you will be sure that the Spirit is grieved.

The Holy Spirit is very jealous for the glory of Christ; whatever detracts, therefore, from Christ; whatever sentiment, or whatever practice that does not place Christ in His own pre-eminence as the true God and the only Saviour, grieves the Spirit.

Need I say that every approach to levity upon religious subjects, that every foolish habit of joking about sacred things, grieves the Spirit, and becomes, therefore, a very serious offence?

When you argue on the wrong side of a question, and so trifle with truth, and with your own conscience, the Spirit is grieved with you.

When you allow in your mind a wrong imagination, though there be no act, or direct intention to commit that act, yet you have grieved the Spirit by the imagination.

One idle word, or a stumbling-block cast by your inconsistency in another's way, or an opportunity of doing good thrown aside, or lost, these are things grieving to the Spirit.

Or, even less things than these, for what I wish you to remember, is the inexpressible sensitiveness of the Spirit, a look of the eye, a quick thought, a proud thought, a hot thought, a wandering thought, a wasted moment, grieves Him.

Would that in your chambers, would that in your businesses, would that when you are alone, would that when you meet and talk one with another, would that in the deepest recesses of the solitude of your own hearts, these words were always to be heard: 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.'

There are four sins against the Holy Ghost mentioned in the Bible. To grieve Him, to resist Him, to quench Him, to blaspheme Him. In this awful series, to grieve, is the first, thank God it is only the first; and so long as the Spirit is only grieved, the very fact that He is grieved, proves His unwillingness to go, and His gladness to come back.

Oh, consider well, that the first of a series is on the way to the last, it is already on the incline, and you know the abyss, the terrible abyss, that lies before you. Cherish, then (the only way not to commit any sin, is to take care to perform the opposite virtue), not only not to grieve, be it no more than levity, cherish the Holy Spirit.

You know how you would do to some dear friend with whom you are living, whom you love with some acute feeling, just act so with the Holy Spirit. Realise His presence, study His mind, believe His love, act out His slightest wishes, wait for His voice. Make it the first thought in everything, What will please Him? This will be His honour, and this will be your life.


JAMES VAUGHAN.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

On the Supposed Duty of Giving a Religious Turn to Subjects of Common Conversation.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. EPHESIANS IV. 29.

I.  DOES God debar us from all pleasant discussion, all agreeable interchange of thoughts and information, unless we can twist and distort them into a kind of religious lecture? Are all the moments of a man's life to be equally grave and serious? Must He regard high spirits as a mortal sin, and gaiety of heart as destructive of all piety? Or, if they be innocent, are our ears never to be cheered and gladdened by their joyous and exhilarating effusions? If, for an instant, we admitted such positions, we must also conclude, that our Creator has implanted in us harmless and delightful feelings, which we must never gratify; that His service is slavery, instead of perfect freedom; that He is extreme to mark what is even said amiss; and that every man is bound to make himself as gloomy, dull, and solemn as he can. Thanks be to God, we have not so learned Christ!

II. Exclusively religious conversation has a direct tendency to produce hypocrisy. Few of those, that might be under the necessity of spending their lives amongst Christians, who gave every conversation a religious turn, and who would be intolerant of lively discussions of general subjects, would like to appear, for any length of time, unaffected by the same heavenly feelings. They would not bear willingly the character of unspiritual, worldly-minded, or reprobate. They would shrink from the constant taunts or insinuations of their more pure, and zealous, and unearthly associates. They would at least endeavour and seem to partake of holiness, so abhorrent of our every day terrestrial concerns. They would, in short, act their part by assuming a disguise. But, if persons of some probity might thus be gradually tempted to take the garb of those with whom they lived, how much more readily would the crafty and designing adopt it, to serve their purpose, to cajole, deceive, and impose upon others! Besides, in so cramped and unnatural a language, as such communication would

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soon establish, there would be a great variety of peculiar modes of expression, a phraseology that might easily supply the place of really pious feeling, and be taken up or laid aside, as occasion required, without the existence of a single religious sentiment in the heart. Thus would it open the doors, on one side, to cant, and hypocrisy, and imposition; and, on the other, expose Christianity itself to the ridicule and contempt of every species of infidels.

III. But, lastly, it would have the effect also of engendering spiritual pride. Persons, who were thus in the habit of talking only of religion, of expressing themselves in its language, and of being not merely powerful or thoroughly conversant in the Scriptures, but using its texts, similes, parables, illustrations, histories, and characters, as vehicles for their own actual ideas, feelings, narratives, and discourses, would beget imperceptibly in their own minds a notion, if not of being actually inspired, yet at least of very superior light, knowledge, and holiness. Such kind of intercourse would also generate an unusual degree of excitement, of fervent feeling, which might be mistaken for genuine sanctity of heart. The leading truths and doctrines of the gospel have in them, beyond a doubt, much of this stimulating power; and its very language flows not from the lips, without awakening the noblest feelings of the heart: we seem raised by the very utterance of them. And though such affections are not in themselves religion, yet they are the accompaniments of it; and self-love will readily give itself credit for genuine holiness, when it glows so warmly under its reflected heat. There is likewise an emulation created in such colloquial religion, which ends in spiritual pride. The initiated naturally strive in holy rivalry to exceed others in their scriptural diction, their sacred ardour and aspirations, their spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. They contend for an eminence in religious advancement, in its language and exterior; they naturally look down upon those who are less elevated, and insensibly value themselves above their fellows, for the shadow and the semblance, instead of the substance of Christianity. Thus, fancying themselves righteous, they come at length to despise others.

A man's religion, it is true, is chiefly an affair of individual interest: it is between himself and his God; and consists not in discussion and display, in texts and much talking. Yet, it must not be forgotten, that he is to consider his neighbour also, and the effect of his example upon others, to confess Christ before men; to 'offend not in word;' to lose no fair opportunity of edifying, comforting, and instructing. 'A word in due season,' observes the wise man, 'how good is it!' and 'how forcible are right words!'

A. B. EVANS.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

Grieving the Spirit.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. EPHESIANS iv. 30.

I. **W**HENEVER you grieve the Holy Spirit you do then, in the first instance, cause sorrow—it is God's own word—to Him to whom you are bound by every generous feeling to give only happiness. Few persons are sufficiently aware of the debt which they owe to the Spirit. They feel that the Father has testified His love by the wonderful surrender of His Son; the Son has given the strongest evidence of His affection by the abandonment for our sake of life and glory; but where is the sacrifice of the Spirit? Yet think you it is no sacrifice for a Being of perfect holiness and immaculate purity to come and dwell in such an abode as a sinner's heart, amidst the scenes of daily life—there, in the closest of all possible contact, to bear with all He hears and sees and feels—there constantly to be planting seeds which we root up, shedding light which we darken, drawing bands which we break, whispering voices which we drown, and offering prayers which we nullify—and to go on doing and enduring all this, with the most unwearied patience, for days and weeks and years—is not this sacrifice? Is it not a sacrifice which binds us to Him by the strongest obligations? Surely, therefore, it should be the first spring of our hearts—a sufficient motive to a holy life, even if there were no other—to give not grief but joy to Him who with such pains and at such a cost invites our love and claims our gratitude.

II. But have you considered, further, that every time you grieve the Spirit, you weaken the seals of your own security? The sequel of the text leads us to this connection of thought. We have time now only to refer to it. As soon as a man is pardoned, the Holy Spirit gives him, in the sense of that pardon, peace. As soon as a man has peace, the Holy Spirit gives him, in the strength of that peace, holiness. The peace is the consequence of the pardon, and the holiness is the consequence of the peace—and both are seals—the peace seals the pardon—and the sanctification seals the peace. But why do we call it a seal? Jesus Christ, the great proprietor, having bought us at an inestimable price, did with us as a man does with his treasures when he goes away for a season—He sealed us till He should return. The little precious casket of every believer's soul is thus sealed with the various impressions of the Holy Ghost, which carry all of them the sign and the image of the Master. By these seals he is evidenced to man, assured to his own conscience, and guarded against Satan and the world. Break any one of these seals, and your

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safety is, in the same proportion, diminished. You are left to yourself, uncertain of your own interest in all the promises, and to all your spiritual enemies, an easy and open prey; and every grieving of the Spirit is a defacing of an impression, and a loosening of one of the seals.

III. For there are few of us, I trust, who have not long since learnt that the secret of all true comfort and satisfaction in the world, is to carry within us the sunshine of God's love, which is peace and joy. And what is that sunshine but the unclouded indwelling of the Holy Ghost? Let that be clear, and then are the times of warm affections, bright, cheerful views, happy fellowships, prayers drawn out in sweetest exercises, the calm confidence, the nerved strength, the hope that plays, and the life that lives. But darken that inner light, place God a little away from you, let the Spirit abate something of His energies, and we all are too familiar with the consequences, the tide of every good and happy thought ebbs fast, dark shadows fall on cold affections and formal obedience, the spirit of a man is changed, his judgment is warped, his intellect grows feeble, his lower passions rise, the miserable chain of cause and effect runs on, while each fresh retiring of the Spirit paves the way to another sin, and every successive sin drives the Spirit into a further distance, fear lends itself to restlessness, and doubt draws on to scepticism.

IV. For mark it yet once more. There are four deep downward steps in the path to death: to grieve the Spirit is the first, to resist the Spirit is the second, to quench the Spirit is the third, to blaspheme the Spirit is the fourth. No one of these is ever reached but by going through that which is previous to it. But he who grieves the Spirit by a thought or an omission may soon resist the Spirit by some more overt act of direct opposition; and he who thus resists the Spirit wilfully may soon wish to put the Spirit out altogether from his heart, as a man quenches a light when he is enamoured of some deed of darkness; and he who has gone on quenching the Spirit is not far off from that daring and awful state which, uttering its blasphemous detestation, and giving vent to its horrible infidelity, is already verging towards a final and irrevocable reprobation. Let the consummation of the tremendous series teach the true character of the first imagination which lies upon its slope, and give emphasis to the solemn word, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'


JAMES VAUGHAN.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Absolution.

And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. S. MATT. ix. 2-7.

I.  HE original ground of the power of absolution, as ministered by men upon earth, is, it appears to me, to be sought in the passage before us. Our Lord, previously to healing the paralytic, had pronounced absolution upon him—nothing more and nothing less. ‘Son,’ He had said to him, ‘thy sins be’ (that is, for such is the force of the tense in the original, ‘they have been and are’) ‘forgiven thee.’ In the Old Testament, Nathan, the prophet, on a memorable occasion, had made a precisely equivalent announcement to the penitent David. ‘And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.’ It is observable that neither the merely human prophet under the old dispensation, nor the divine-human prophet under the new dispensation, say, ‘I forgive thee;’ nor do any such words occur in the formularies of the Book of Common Prayer. The words, ‘By Christ’s authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins,’ are indeed found in our office for the Visitation of the Sick; but this is by no means equivalent to ‘I forgive thee.’ To forgive is one thing; to absolve is another. To forgive sins is the part and inalienable prerogative of God, against whom, as the great legislator and judge of the conscience, all sin is committed. To absolve is to dispense and convey forgiveness to those who have the right dispositions of heart for receiving it; and this is the part of God’s messengers and representatives, whether under the old or new dispensations.

Now observe this language narrowly: ‘That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.’

He is not claiming to forgive sins as the Son of God, or in the same manner as God in heaven forgives them. To have done even

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this would not in His case have been blasphemy, would not have been snatching at a prerogative to which He had no right ; for indeed He was ‘God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.’ But it was part of the mystery of Christ’s humiliation to empty Himself of the powers and prerogatives of the Godhead, and to hold them in abeyance, so long as He was in the Flesh. So He here puts Himself forward simply as the Son of Man upon earth, in contradistinction to God Almighty in heaven. And His position is, that He, as Son of Man, the great-covenant head and representative of the human race, hath authority, while on earth, to dispense and convey God’s pardons, to open the treasure-house of God’s mercy to those whom He sees, by His searching intuition, to be fit recipients of it. And it appears from the finishing touch in S. Matthew’s narrative, that the people understood His claim. ‘When the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power (literally, such authority) unto men.’ The authority I take to be the absolving authority of which our Lord had spoken just before ; ‘that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority upon earth to forgive sins.’ They acknowledged (being constrained to do so by the miracle which had established His claim to it) that this authority was now deposited among men upon earth—given to Christ, by God the Father, for the behoof and benefit of the whole human race, of which He is the head.

II. We now proceed to a further stage in the consideration of the subject. We have seen that while upon earth, His glory veiled from mortal eye by a body of humiliation, our Lord, in His human nature, claimed the power of dispensing and conveying God’s forgiveness.

Did He make any mention of this same power, when He was no longer ‘upon earth,’ when He had put off the natural and put on the spiritual body ? Yes : the mention of this power, and the delegation of it to the Apostles, to exercise it in His name, as He had exercised it in the Father’s, is one of the first words which fell from His lips after the Resurrection. On the first Easter day, at evening, He came to His Apostles through closed doors, and having shown them His hands and side, whereby remission had been meritoriously procured, He greeted them thus : ‘Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me (sent Me to herald and dispense forgiveness of sins), even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.’

By these solemn words absolution may be said to have been instituted, as an independent ordinance of the Christian Church. This fundamental power was communicated in the first interview of our Lord with the Eleven.

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III. But it may be asked, 'Even granting that the Apostles had this power, does it appear that there was any entail of it to those who should succeed them in the government of the Church?' And here I make my appeal to the Book of Common Prayer. I am not reasoning with dissenters, but with Churchmen; and with Churchmen, if they are what they profess to be, the verdict of the Book of Common Prayer must be conclusive. The profession of Churchmanship, if it mean anything, cannot mean less than this, that he who makes it, accepts the Prayer Book as his commentary and interpretation of the Bible. Now the Book of Common Prayer directs the identical words, in which our Lord delegated to His Apostles the power of absolution, to be repeated separately to each man who is ordained priest.

But, while we stoutly maintain, on Scriptural and Prayer Book grounds, that the power of absolution has been by our Lord lodged in the Christian ministry, we hold, on exactly the same grounds, that the exercise of it should be for the most part public, and that only on very rare and exceptional occasions, where the tender considerate spirit of the Church of Christ dictates some concession to the cravings of a morbid conscience and a burdened heart, should it be administered privately. Where in the New Testament is there any trace of a private confession of sins made to an Apostle, or of any private absolution ministered by an Apostle, as the correlative of such confession? There is not the faintest whisper of such a practice from the first page of the volume to the last. S. Paul absolves the incestuous Corinthian on his repentance and humiliation; but he does it in a letter, which was meant to be publicly read in the congregation: 'To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ.' S. Peter did not say to Simon Magus, 'Come to me, and confess your sins, and receive absolution, as the beginning of a better life;' but he refers him entirely to God. 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.' Nor, though to him individually, by a special grant, the power of absolution has been delegated—'I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven'—does he allow a fellow-sinner to kneel before him; 'Stand up,' said he to Cornelius, 'I myself also am a man.'

Heartily believe in, in order that you may benefit by, the absolving power lodged in the ministry of the Christian Church. Look to the public absolutions of the Church, as really conveying the pardon of God to penitent sinners; and endeavour to appropriate them by faith.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Mental Idolatry.

Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?
EZEKIEL XIV. 3.



WHAT is the sin and the vice of which the prophet speaks, and how may we ourselves be guilty of it? The father of modern philosophy and science has shown us that there are in the mind of man, as man, natural idols, which act as impediments to his acquisition of knowledge and his search after truth. Till these idols are overthrown and broken in pieces and taken away, it is simply useless for man to pursue knowledge. His efforts will be neutralised and their results vitiated. He will not arrive at truth.

I. Now if this is so in the matter of human science, it is none the less worthy of our regard in the matter of divine truth and of the knowledge of God. We cannot know God, whom to know is eternal life, as long as these natural obstacles are not taken out of the way. We cannot serve Him acceptably as long as, instead of being dethroned, they are still set up in our hearts. Probably as a mere general statement no one would care to dispute this, because it is too self-evident and too much in accordance with acknowledged truth. It is only when we begin to apply the principles involved that objection will occur. What then is the practical bearing of this truth?

1. First, there must be a single eye to the knowledge of God. If we have not made up our minds that the one only object worth living for is God and the knowledge of God, we have set up idols in our hearts no less than the men in Ezekiel's time, who came and sat before him.

2. Again, not only must there be a clear and undimmed perception of God as the one sole object of our services, but there must also be a readiness to sacrifice anything in order to know and to serve Him. The man who is not prepared at any cost to himself to know and to serve God, is not prepared to serve Him at all.

II. But if this is true and in proportion as it is, there are certain general principles to which it behoves us all to give heed when we come to the worship of God.

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1. First of all we must empty ourselves of ourselves. We must come as though our present knowledge of God were as nothing, and as if God were still to be known and learnt.

2. One would fain pass by, but in a mixed congregation one dares not, the direct and obvious moral application which, indeed, is most prominent in the prophet's words, 'These men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face.' There is nothing which so infallibly prevents us from seeing the truth of God as secret sin. As long as sin, in one of its innumerable forms, lurks in the heart or on the conscience, the service of God will be a vain thing, because the pursuit of truth is a lie. It is that practised dishonesty, it is that cherished lust, it is that pampered self-love, it is that incurable indolence, it is that willingly defiled imagination, it is that malice and envy which vitiates all your worship and renders all your religion a lie.

STANLEY LEATHES.

Conversion.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. EZEKIEL xviii. 27.

THIS passage of God's word requires explaining, for we may take a very inadequate view indeed of its meaning, plain though it seems.

I. First of all, what is the wickedness of the wicked? One generally speaks of adulterers, fornicators, murderers, thieves, as being wicked men, but our Lord in His account of what He will do at the last day, declares that He will visit with the most appalling punishment, the selfish, the hard-hearted, those who have shut up their bowels of compassion from their needy fellow-creatures. So that, if we are to judge from their punishment, the selfish and covetous are the most wicked of men.

II. 'And doeth that which is lawful and right.' Now this 'doing that which is lawful and right' must be according to the dispensation. We are in a dispensation of grace, and so we must do accordingly. We must look to Jesus on the Cross as bearing our sins. We must plead with God, His Name, His Merits, His Intercession, and we must use the means of grace which He has given to us, especially the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, because in it He engages Himself to come and dwell within us.

III. 'He shall save His soul alive.' This does not, of course, mean

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that by so doing, he shall atone for his sin, or sanctify himself by his own power, but it means, that in the matter of his salvation, he is to be active, he is not, under pretence of giving Him more glory, to leave all to God, and fold his arms.


You, then, who are turning from sin, must come to God in every way which He has appointed, you must do what is lawful, according to the law, not only of natural religion, or of Christian society, but according to the law of Christ, you must come to Him to receive life, you must eat His Flesh and drink His Blood to have His life within you.

M. F. SADLER.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Gospel a Fire.

I am come to send fire on the earth. S. LUKE xii. 49.

I.  HE text calls the gospel a fire. And the first remark upon it must be, that a fire is a power. How it spreads, and glows, and rages, and devours; how it strides from point to point, from wood to stone, from gallery to wall, from floor to tower, licking, and devouring, and consuming, while a whole population cowers before it, and can only stand idly by, beholding and weeping over its work! Now I say that when the gospel is called a fire sent upon the earth, we shall do well to remember that a fire is a power; not a name, not an idea, not a poor, faint, creeping thing which may be disregarded and let alone, because at any moment human exertion can interpose and put it down, but a great, an active, at last a domineering and irresistible force, against which all the skill and all the strength in the world are as powerless as an infant's touch. Never suppose that the gospel is an insignificant or despicable thing; whatever else it is or is not, it is certainly not that. The gospel is a fire; and what a fire is, you know and you have seen.

II. But then we must admit, and we do so with sorrow, that there are places, as there are hearts, in which the gospel is not a fire. And here we reach a very anxious and a very critical question. A fire, we have said, is a power. Our Lord is here speaking of the gospel as a power for division. He says that one effect of His coming upon

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earth, one effect of His leaving a gospel to be proclaimed when He was gone back to heaven, would be a spreading and desolating conflagration in human families. And He tells us how this will act. There may be a family, He says, of five persons. The gospel gets into that household. One of the family has fallen in with the true, living Word of God; perhaps from a minister casually heard; perhaps from a friend accidentally met; perhaps on a bed of sickness, or in a providence which has constrained reflection. Sin is now felt as a sore burden too heavy for man to bear. And the Saviour of sinners has at last revealed Himself as taking away and cleansing from all sin. Deep gratitude has taken possession of the relieved and tranquillised spirit; a gratitude which lives and moves within, and which cannot be let or stayed from working. Now, therefore, it cannot be altogether a secret that something has happened to that one of the five. With no wish to obtrude upon the rest either his new conviction or the experience through which he has passed to it, he cannot, if he would, and he would not, be precisely as in days of ignorance and thoughtlessness; he must do something, and he must forbear from doing some things, which before were left undone, or which before were done, 'according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that still worketh in the children of disobedience.' In that house henceforth there is division, discord, disunion; and the gospel is the cause of it. Henceforth the only alternative of union in that house must be, the backsliding of the one, or the conversion of the rest. Christ 'came to send fire upon the earth;' and in that house at least 'it is already kindled.'

You observe that it is just because the gospel is a power that this effect is produced by it. So long as the gospel was not (in that particular case) a power, so long it was not a fire; it caused no breach and no disunion. Therefore we are constrained to wish, even against our wish, for such signs of its working. If Christ does not send fire upon the earth, neither can He send peace into hearts. The fire is the sign of the peace. Because the sweet influence of the gospel has entered a heart, therefore division has entered a household. If we are contented, in any town or in any house, to let the gospel die out as a power; if, that is, we are satisfied with an orthodox belief, a regular worship, a decent conduct, and a practically worldly life, there will be no fire certainly; the gospel itself will be a mere balm, a mere soporific, a mere lullaby of the soul. It is only at a later stage than this, when one here and another there has been thoroughly awakened and aroused by the personal call of Christ, that the prophecy will begin to be fulfilled: 'I came not to give peace but a sword: I am come to send fire upon the earth.'

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The Gradual Miracle.

I see men as trees, walking. S. MARK viii. 24.

THIS particular miracle is the parable of our times.

I. It is so in reference to the things of God.

We pray indeed (who does not pray?) for grace to live as we ought, in the careful avoidance of known sin, and the diligent discharge of known duty; but do we seriously expect an answer to this prayer? Do we in our inmost hearts believe that an influence, a guidance, a control, a suggestion, a presence, call it what you will, is vouchsafed, is maintained, is continued, day by day, and through each day, as the direct reply of God to this petition? What can we say more, in regard to all these things, than that at best we 'see men as trees, walking'? that we have a dim, dull, floating impression of there being something in them, rather than a clear, bold, strong apprehension of what and whom and why we have believed?

II. And if this be so in the things of God, in matters of direct revelation and of Christian faith; it is scarcely less true in reference to the things of men; to our views of life, the present life and the future, and to the relations in which we stand to those fellow-beings with whom the providence of God brings us into contact.

The blind man must come to Jesus, and come in faith; and which of all of us has done so? It needs a desire to be saved, and it needs a willingness to be saved in Christ's way, and it needs a consciousness of deep defilement, and it needs a conviction that His Blood cleanseth from all guilt, and that His Holy Spirit can set us free from all sin, to bring a man under the healing touch even once. Oh, try and examine yourselves, 'and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God,' but honestly and in earnest, that ye be not, in the great day, 'condemned with the world'! Even the first act of healing is a gift 'above gold and precious stones'; despise it not! Power out of weakness, peace out of warfare, light out of darkness, sight out of dim, groping, creeping blindness, this it is to be the subject of the first healing. God grant us all grace to come for it to Him who is still on His throne of grace, to grant repentance and to grant forgiveness.

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VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

The Holy Spirit Grieved. THE following declaration occurs in the memoir of Lord Thomas Lyttelton, son of the celebrated writer on the Conversion of S. Paul : ' I have had some serious conversations with my father, and one evening he concluded by recommending me to address Heaven to have mercy upon me, and to join my prayers to his constant and paternal cares for my reformation. These expressions, with his preceding counsels, had such an effect upon me that I had bent the stubborn sinews of my knees, when it occurred to me that my devotions might be seen through the key-hole. This drew me from my pious attitude, and having secured this aperture, I went to let down the window curtains also ; and just in the performance of the act, some lively music which struck up in the street caught my attention, and gave a sudden change to all my devout ideas. So I girded on my sword, and went to the theatre, where the entertainment soon dissipated all my gloomy thoughts.'

God's Readiness to Forgive. AN old man and his wife in Flintshire were much annoyed by their neighbours' cattle going over their fences into their wheat and grass, and thus causing great loss to the poor old people. David, the old man, got impatient at last, and one day, entering the house, he said to his wife : ' Our neighbour's cattle have been again in our wheat. I'll make him pay the damage this time.' ' Don't talk about paying, David. I will repay, saith the Lord.' ' No, indeed, He won't,' said David ; ' He is too ready to forgive, a great deal, to do that.'

We may smile at David's saying, but it was David who knew Him best. ' Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.'

A Kind Word. A PRETTY story is told of Leonardo da Vinci's boyhood. The little fellow was accustomed to buy such caged birds as he saw exposed for sale on the streets of Florence that he might set them free. The little Leonardo early learned the lesson that there is more genuine pleasure in a good act than in a good possession. There are, in the path in which each of us walk, many caged birds which we can set free. Of all keys to unlock the prison captives sympathy is the best. A kind word of praise, a hearty expression of good-will, a little help offered at the right time—none of these things cost much, but each may make the difference, to many a sad heart, between joy and sorrow.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	.	.	.	.	EPHESIANS V. 15-21.
GOSPEL,	.	.	.	.	S. MATTHEW XXII. 1-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	.	.	.	.	EZEKIEL XXXIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	.	.	.	.	EZEKIEL XXXVII. OR DANIEL I.
SECOND LESSONS,	.	.	.	.	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Key of the World's Mystery.

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. EPHESIANS V. 14.



THE progress of men's thoughts in later times has had this among other results, that we have been made more alive to the seriousness and the difficulty of questions relating to our condition and place in the world, our very existence and destiny. Of course, in all ages, there have been persons who have asked these questions anxiously. There have been times, indeed, when they have convulsed the world. But there have also been long spaces and tracts of time when most men could go through life without having these questions forced on their minds, and without hearing much about them, except in a formal and matter-of-course sort of way. But now it is different. We are sent straight to nature and fact; and we are told to be real, and to think of what our words mean: and on this understanding these questions, questions of the whence and the whither of mankind,

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of ourselves, are felt, more than our fathers felt them, to be formidable ones. Whence and why do I come into life? What was I made for? What have I to do in this world? What is to become of me? What am I on the way to? These questions, so natural to ask, so easy to answer by rote, have brought home to many minds the profound depths of our real ignorance, and are listened to by many with beating or with aching hearts. Eyes have been opened to see the wonders and the mysteries which attend the most familiar things of life; the triple mystery of certain yet inexplicable facts: the mystery of sin, the mystery of pain, the mystery of will. And these perplexities and questions are no longer mere matters of abstract speculation, themes for philosophers in the study or divines in the schools to dispute them. They carry with them, to those in the street and market-place and by the domestic hearth, happiness or distress, hope or darkness, life or death.

And one thing further has been brought home to the consciousness of our generation: that is, that nature by itself cannot give the answer to them. There have been times in the history of thought when men were patient of theory and speculation, and hopeful of the powers of inference and deduction; and believed that from the data of our natural knowledge they might build up fabrics that would stand, of imposing certainties about all that concerns the nature and the relations of man to the universe, seen and unseen. Their failures, and a more real sense of what such knowledge means, have made us more cautious or less ambitious. Nature does indeed speak of God, of duty, of immortality. 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' Conscience cannot anywhere escape from its unearthly visitants, Right and Wrong, 'I ought,' and 'I ought not.' The human soul, in the very face of death, distinctly believes that it is not to die. But though nature does teach us, does prophesy of God, and hope, and man's prerogative of justice, of purity, of prayer, its answers to our questions are dark and imperfect. It refuses our cross-examination. It will not tell us what we want to know: it will not force its lessons on the unwilling. The gainsayer declares that it is silent. The doubter complains that it is ambiguous. Few can be sanguine enough to hope to wrest from nature the secret of its origin and government. It hardly helps man to understand himself. There have been times when men have seriously thought that in some of the rival religions to that of Jesus Christ something might be found worth attending to, which might clear up the mysteries of this world and life, which would tell men what they could not find out from nature about themselves, their law, and their fate. But those times are gone for ever, until human reason relapses once more into barbarism and ignorance. In no religion which the world has ever known is it possible even to

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imagine again a serious alternative faith to that of Christendom. What nature cannot tell us, no one will ever dream of going to extinct or obsolete religions to learn.

I. Here, then, we are—as we have begun keenly in these days to feel—in this little corner of God's immense universe, lost amid its infinite spaces, its countless suns, its depths and heights of being, knowing much, but with all our wonderful knowledge utterly unable to fathom just some of the questions which are nearest to us, which most interest us: so powerful, so mighty, so inventive—such at one moment we seem to ourselves—yet held fast, helpless and unresisting, in the grip of natural forces, in the deadly grip of pain, of death, of moral evil. We are encompassed by abysses of darkness down which an eye cannot pierce. We are prisoners to necessities which nothing can alter. With all our love and our longings, our aspirations of greatness, our ideas of happiness, our faith in righteousness, our sense of beauty, our delight in living, here we are—if all that we have and know is what this world can give us and tell us—orphans without a father or a family, or a home, brought we know not whence, and thrown by the storms of time on an unknown shore: creatures, with maimed and disproportioned nature, mocked by the contradictory and confusing accidents of their condition: beings, who with all their knowing, cannot make out what they are, matter, or mind, or spirit, a little lower than the angels, a little more unhappy than the beasts, and who, irresistibly drawn on to hope, yet seem to have no destiny. This, at the end of the account, after all allowances made for the greatness of what man has done, the extent of what man has known, the happiness which man has tasted, this is the sad and dreadful consciousness of the heart, if the world and life are nothing but what nature can tell us of.

Whence come we? Where are we? Whither are we going?—who can help asking—and who can bear the blankness of darkness, which comes on him when he tries to think of the answer as given by the clear and unhesitating informants which tell him of the certainties of mathematics, of the measure of the earth and sun, or the laws of chemistry and mechanics. It is impossible to exaggerate the hopelessness of such an answer. Have we indeed nothing besides?

Ah, yes! encompassed in mystery as we are, as we always must be, there is in the darkness a point of light. Little as we know of the infinite around us, that dreadful sense of not knowing what we are, and why we are, that dreadful sense of despairing orphanhood, of being fatherless, uncared for, purposeless, has passed away from the world. It has so passed away from our familiar thoughts, that it requires an effort to realise what we should be if we actually were

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alone—absolutely alone—with nature, as we know it. ‘The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.’ No one who really thinks, no one who really feels, can make light of the perplexities which even still surround the things which most interest us in life. At every turn we are made to feel how little we really know about them: how different they are, and turn out from what we had thought; what a strange, surprising, disappointing, baffling scene we are going through; how tangled are all its threads, how shallow and superficial our judgments and reasonings about it. There are those whom it seems to stun and confound and drive to despair. But whatever we know or do not know, we know this, we may know this, if there is such a thing as knowledge in the world—we know—surely, we know as certainly as we can know anything we have not seen with our eyes—we know that One has come, as no one ever came to the world before, who came to make quite clear and quite certain a number of questions on which, in spite of all efforts, men have been in the deepest perplexity; who came to tell us whence and why we are here, and what we have before us in the after-time. He came to tell us, once for all, that we are not orphans and castaways, drifting about on the boundless sea of the universe; He came to tell us of ‘our Father who is in heaven,’ even God. We know that He is come, we know that He died. We know—unless all human knowledge of the past is a vain and unprofitable dream, and all its grounds and conditions, and combined guarantees, deluding and misleading phantoms—we know that He is risen from the dead. Some one—we know who He is—has been alive after having been dead. Some one among the sons of men has conquered death. We know that this tremendous and unimaginable event has changed not only the course, but the aspects of the world and human life. Neither are, nor can be, what they were before it; neither are, nor can be, what they would be without it. Whatever else we don’t know, whatever else may disturb or vex us because we don’t know it, here is that which makes the whole difference to man’s thoughts, about his place, his ignorance, his anxieties. ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ He has come, and He has spoken. He has given us light by His victory over the grave, and in that light all that He was, and all that He said, and all that He promised stands before us in the illumination of a divine unveiling. ‘God manifest in the Flesh’—‘we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, when He dwelt among us full of grace and truth.’

II. The answer, so far as it goes, is as clear, is as real, as the question. It is given us in terms which belong to this present state of being;

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terms of which we can measure the meaning and the force; terms which meet us in the sphere to which we are accustomed, the sphere of experience. For we know what death is, and we know what must be meant by 'one being alive from the dead.' We ask, what nature and experience cannot tell us, whence and from whose hands we came. One from the dead tells us—it is no mere guess or surmise or inference of our own—tells us that we come from our Father's hand and are ever in our Father's hand. We grope in darkness among the tremendous problems of moral evil, of the sins of the world, of the sin of our own soul. One from the dead is come, and with clear unwavering tones tells us that sin indeed is a reality; that He died for the sin of men and that its forgiveness and its cure are in His hands. We ask, we consider, what is death? that 'parting of the breath' behind which none living has ever been, beyond which none living can imagine anything. He is come from the grave itself, from the depth and silence in which the millions of the generations of the dead are lying, in which all trace of them has perished—and He tells us, and shows us in His own person, that death is but an incident and an appearance; that there is life beyond it—life and all the highest things that pertain to life, life with its purpose fulfilled, life and righteousness, life and immortality. We stand silent and without answer, when the sufferers ask us why they suffer; what is the meaning, or the justice, or the use, of these tremendous dispensations of agony, unmitigated and without remedy, which seem to visit without distinction the innocent and the guilty; the misery of the helpless child, the pangs endured by the brute creation. They have no account to give to us of their terrible presence, of their unaccountable assaults; pain and its phenomena are ultimate facts, insoluble as they are awful. But this we know, that He who was the conqueror of death and established by that conquest His title to be the redeemer of His creatures, drank together with them the cup of pain. Sinless, He submitted to its torturing. Almighty, He bent beneath its yoke. All-perfect, He accepted whatever purpose it had to fulfil in the Father's order. Till the 'times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' we must be content with twilight, we shall often open our eyes only to perceive how thick is the darkness, we must be prepared to endure, 'the burden of the mystery,'

'The weary and the heavy weight
Of all this unintelligible world.'

Its riddles are not for our unriddling; its enigmas are not meant for explanation in the days of time. But in all the darkness there is this great point of light. It is certain, if anything is certain in history, that He is risen. Our refuge, our only refuge, from the

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agonising mysteries of the world is in His empty grave. We know now in whose world we are. We know that it is one risen from the dead,

‘Who brought us hither,
And holds the keys of whence and whither.’

III. And we know more. We know that He is come, and has conversed with men. But further, we know what He who had all power in heaven and earth has promised, even to us. He has promised, though He went away, yet still to be with us in our course through the storms and the pains of life. ‘Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world.’ ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.’ We have Him who once appeared in the world among us. We have Him who was dead and is alive for ever. We have Him, to our comfort and blessing and guidance, if we will; but whether we will or no, we have Him with us, the King and Master of all living men. We have Him still, though behind the veil of this mortal state. He is here behind the veil of ignorance, though we recognise Him not, though we deny Him, though we persist in living as though He had never been. He is here, behind the veil of sin, behind that dark poisonous cloud, which day by day goes up from the face of all the earth, between the souls of men and the purity and light of God. He is here, behind the veil of pain, behind its apparently capricious and meaningless tyranny, its cruelties which mock explanation, its tortures for which there is no cure, its grasp from which there is no deliverance. He is here, behind the veil of our long-standing quarrels and divisions, our hopeless misunderstandings, our cherished antipathies, our blind zeal, our shocking profanations of the sacred name of religion. He is here, unseen, but He is here, watching us, judging us. He is still here, that mighty Lord, who once rose from the dead. He is here, though they know it not, to the proud and the insolent. He is here, to the humble and the meek. He is here, waiting to reveal Himself, waiting to bless, in the secret chamber, on the bed of sickness. He is here to meet us, in spite of our denials, in the Eucharistic Feast: amid the strife of tongues, amid fierce and sometimes brutal controversy, the incredible rancour, the incredible weaknesses, the incredible bitternesses, which have so strangely gathered around His Sacrament of Union, as if the scene of the Passion was continued around it to this hour. He is there, beyond the storms, with His words of peace and hope, ‘Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ For He has promised to be with us for ever, knowing all that this mortal life was to be to us; knowing its darkness, knowing all its

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deadening temptations, all the sophistries of its despair. And every Easter, as it comes, renews the call and the promise, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

All things, all men, at this present time, science, nature, religion, the enemies and critics of our faith, and its interpreters, are calling on us to be real and true. Let us be real and true about this great call to light. Let us be real and true, true to fact, true to ourselves as to what the world and life would be without Christ's Death and Resurrection, as to what they are with Christ alive from the dead. With Him we have that for which we may well join with the alleluias of angels; without Him we are—words cannot exaggerate, words cannot express it—we are of all men most miserable—more miserable, we, the heirs of all the ages, the victims of such a delusion, than the most debased of savages. We believe Him. Let us grasp the thought that amongst other realities of life, this, too, is real, that He who is so mighty and living, said that He should ever be with us, is, therefore, with us at this day in as real truth as He was with His friends in Galilee. Let us beseech Him, as they did, to give us, what is more than mere knowledge and assent, more than conviction, to give us the effort, the energy, of faith; to strengthen our wills which so often resolve, and so often fail; to open our eyes which see not, to quicken our hearts which feel not, that the veils of bewilderment, of sense, of custom, of sin, may not hide this from our hope and love. May He help us to S. Paul's wish in true earnest and to its fulfilment, that longing desire spoken in the name of all his brethren, in all that it may mean, in all its wonder: yes, if it must be so, in all that is awful and tragic in it, for no human life is secure against tragedy: 'that I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if so be that I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

May He, who is the Resurrection and the Life, raise us up to newness of life, supplying to us ways of repentance according to our needs. May the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect us in every good work to do His will, working in us what is acceptable before Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever.

DEAN CHURCH.

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II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Walking circumspectly.

See then that ye walk circumspectly. EPHESIANS V. 15.



HERE is a grace too little thought of, which, nevertheless, belongs eminently to a Christian man. Let not any man think lightly of it, as though it were a mere heathen virtue. I mean, a cautious exactness.

It is this of which the Apostle is speaking in my text. For so it would be most literally translated, 'See that ye walk accurately, or exactly.'

Now, it is in itself so very beautiful, it so commends religion before the eyes of all men, that we can scarcely do a more important thing than consider what is the nature of the exactness of a Christian's walk, and how it may be attained.

I. Are we not walking on the narrow edge between the two eternities of heaven and hell? Is not every thought we think to meet us again at the bar of God? Is not the glory of God committed to every action that I do, and every word I say? And has not everything I say and do a consequence, which is to spring up and live after I am dead and gone, beyond my grave, for ever and for ever?

Who then, but a sceptic, or a madman, feeling himself in the midst of all these solemnities, will despise the warning, 'See that ye walk circumspectly'?

It is the glory of omnipotence to do everything perfectly; it is the duty of grace to do each proportionately.

Need I say that the Christian must be a man very exact in his accounts? As he hopes he is with God, so he must try to be with his fellow-man; to be out of debt; to owe nothing but love.

And this should be his temporal as well as his spiritual rule, that were he called away by any summons, however short, he might be able confidently to say, 'I have no account unsettled, with God or man.'

But not only in these negative ways will the Christian be a man who walks accurately out of doors; but in every engagement he will aim to be more punctual in every undertaking, more earnest in every obligation, more exact, as a man who has always these words before

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his eyes, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'

Therefore he has his definite labour of usefulness and love. And if he undertakes anything, he considers himself bound to persevere in it. He is as a man not variable and uncertain, but as a man should be who stands upon a rock. He is a man so careful of time that he will not let a moment drop, because even moments are portions of the time of eternity. What others waste without a thought, he will love to cultivate. It is a pure inaccuracy which is not accurate about the little threads. He knows how easily, by little threads, virtue slides into vice. He knows what a little step it is from the middle out into an extreme; and he finds that this exactness helps him in one thing very much, in overcoming besetting sin.

If any man wishes to overcome a besetting sin, let him be accurate with himself. For there are paths in the journey of life where even the circumspect man must walk still more circumspectly.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Fulness in the Holy Spirit.

But be ye filled with the Spirit. EPHESIANS V. 18.

I. 'BE ye full in the Spirit.' The phrase suggests a picture, and lends itself easily to material illustration. The disciple is presented in it as a being who is, on the assumption, in the Spirit, but who, being so placed, yet needs this precept to be filled. The Holy Ghost surrounds the man as an atmosphere, or let us now say as an ocean. Not only is He, of course, omnipresent, but up to a certain point He is around this Christian in the way of special grace; the man would not be a living Christian at all if the Spirit had not taken hold of him, and as it were wafted him into saving union with his Lord, in repenting faith. And doubtless also the man is thus not only in the Spirit; the Spirit is in him. For this work of the call, the attraction, and the union, how was it done? Not mechanically, but by the Holy One's secret action at the springs of thought and will; by His internal discovery to the man of himself and of his Saviour.

Yet, for this disciple who is within the Spirit, and within whom the Spirit lives and works, there is yet room for the precept of the Apostle, 'Be full in the Spirit.'

What does it mean? Illustrations of the spiritual by the material

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are always to be used with caution, or they may lend themselves to the gravest errors. But what is human language, after all, if not a mass and maze of material imagery, to be used in the transmission of even the most subtle and vanishing thought? So the aid of illustration not only may but must be used in the spiritual region. Can we not use it here? I see suggested in the words before us, 'Be full in the Spirit,' a material picture somewhat of this fashion. A vessel, an earthen vessel, is plunged into a crystalline sea; it is in the pure flood, surrounded by it at every point. But it carries in it, still unexpelled, a charge of atmospheric air, and it is so placed that, though its mouth is open to the water, this charge of air—of tainted and malarious air, we will suppose—cannot escape. What is the result of the conditions? By dint of compression, indeed, the water makes some inroad on the air, but the air effectually excludes the water from the vessel as a whole. Not till some way is found for the discharge of the obstructing occupant will there be room in the vessel for the fulness of the surrounding sea. In proportion to such discharge will be the influx; as the vessel is evacuated, so will it be filled.

Look at the spiritual facts indicated by the imagery of the vessel and the sea. The man has come, through grace, to the foot of the Cross, to peace with God, to living union with Him who is our Life. But in the sequel of things, as he now goes on to live his life in the flesh, day by day, certain obstructive matters, whatever they may be, are found remaining in the inner world; and these restrict the free inflow of the blessed life and power which yet has touched him. The human vessel is in the heavenly stream, but there is that in the vessel which, from the point of view of the man's responsibility and moral choice, keeps the stream out from a part, perhaps from large parts, of the inner life. The grace of God, that is to say, the God of grace in saving action, is something to the man; perhaps He is much to the man; but ah, how far He is from what He is to be, from what He may be, if His creature is but willing! And the experience of what it is to have it otherwise is an experience which it is the creature's duty, as well as glory, to obtain: 'Be not drunk with wine; but be ye, in the Spirit, full.'

II. The matter is as practical as possible. Here is a commandment, not merely a counsel, but a commandment, of perfection. We have remembered, somewhat in the abstract, how its fulfilment is to be compassed. What does it mean, when we translate the abstract into the concrete, the principle into life, into the life of ourselves to-day? Are we, in some hour of deeper recollection, constrained to lament that whatever is intended by spiritual fulness, it is scarcely likely to find its counterpart in our experience? that too often, on

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the other hand, we are straitened in ourselves? that a sense of religious weariness and disappointment is not unknown to us? that the things which belong to our heavenly Master are not quite those which fill us? that ours is not quite a glad conscious life, stirring in the depths, and expressed spontaneously upon the surface; the heart's abundance speaking through the lips, and not the lips only, but the temper, the tone, of an habitual faith, and hope, and love? Are we saddened by the confession to ourselves that the fulness and pressure of external labour and intercourse find no adequate response in an inward upspringing fulness of divine communion, such as beyond all other things strengthens the will by leaving a deep calm around it, and clears the judgment by a wonderful disencumbrance of anxieties from the heart? Is the fountain low beneath its brim, whereas the Master of old, sitting by the Syrian well, promised to His disciple that the water He would give should be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life?

All too often, in the Christian life, where there is complaint of spiritual shallowness and drought, there lies in the recesses of the soul some unsettled controversy, unsettled between the man and his God; something undone, something indulged in, something curtailed off from the direct gaze of even the inward eye, yet which it owns to be there by not looking, if it can help it, in that direction.

If so, we will not waste the moments on regret. 'Take ye away the stone,' and the holy fountain will flow, with no assistance of our hydraulic enginery. Let the earthen vessel, in the self-surrender made possible by the sight of Christ, give release to the imprisoned and imprisoning air; and no pressure on its part will be needed to let in the waters of the Pacific Sea of God.

H. C. G. MOULE.

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III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Marriage of Christ to His Church.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. S. MATTHEW xxii. 2.



THE marriage of Christ is the mystery of the Church, and it belongs to the initiated. To those who stand in the outer circle of thought, it is a word and a fable. To those who are within, it is the simplest and the grandest of all possible realities.

There was a certain King—King of Kings, and Lord of Lords—who, from all eternity, planned a marriage for His only Son. It was not good for Him that He should be alone, in a blessed paradise though He lived, and though He had all things round Him to minister to His joy. He was not Himself content with a solitary happiness. He desired to have that with Him which He could call His own, and which He could cherish, and which He could make happy, for ever. And by a strange and wonderful process it was effected. That Son of God fell into a deep sleep, and no sooner was He fallen into that sleep of death, though not a bone of Him was broken, but out of his side, nearest to His heart, there flowed that Water and that Blood which make, nay, which are, His appointed bride. For no one can form part of that body, which is the help-meet of Christ, until that Water and that Blood are in them.

I. In this manner, after the deep counsel of Almighty God, first came into existence that Church, which, in the fulness of time, was to be united to Christ in the holiest and the dearest of bonds.

Do you ask, Whence the Church sprang? I answer, From the everlasting purpose of God. Do you ask, When it was born? I say, At the moment of Christ's death upon the Cross; the Water and the Blood, the cleansing and the life, the pardon and the grace, made it. As Jesus is its object, Jesus is its author. Alone, He is its cradle, alone He is its home. And so is it 'bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh,' in all the sympathies and all the oneness of His wonderful nature. And it is called Ishah, because it is taken out of Ish; the Church, because it is taken out of Christ.

Such was the bride's birth, the deep origin of the spiritual marriage which there is betwixt Christ and His Church, as they lay for ever in the mind of God.

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II. But now we are to consider how this union—of which all marriage is the intended allegory—actually takes place between Him and us.

And here we observe again that the first mover is, as it ought to be, the Lord Jesus Christ. The wife does not seek her husband; but the husband seeks his wife. We do not begin with seeking Christ—we could not if we would, we ought not if we could, it would be unseemly—but He begins by seeking us. And who shall say how long, how patiently, how lovingly, how winningly, He woos the souls He seeks. He fixes His heart upon us, He selects us, He prefers us, He goes about to have us. It is not we who ask Him, but He who asks us, with such infinite condescension and tenderness, ‘Lovest thou Me? Wilt thou be Mine?’ Marvellous fact, but true as it is marvellous, that He, ‘the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,’ should be the one to take the initiative with such a poor, fallen, unlovely thing as we, and make His suit to us, that we may be His. But so it is, and much more than there can be in any type, however drawn out; for all the while is He not putting the very will into us that we should consent to His overtures? Else, did He not, is there one in heaven now who ever would have ‘seen any beauty in Him that they should desire Him’?

III. See what Christ is doing for you. For then only you will be satisfied to do all you ought for Christ, and be all you ought to Christ, when you remember all His wonderful engagements which He is fulfilling for you. He has paid all your debts, and you are no longer liable. When He took you, He made Himself responsible to the great creditor of us all; and well has He cancelled the obligation. Before you knew Him, you were ‘sold under sin,’ going down into the pit. Now He has ‘found a ransom,’ and ‘lifted you up, and set you among princes,’ and you are the freest of the free. And He has undertaken for all your wants, whatever may befall you. He has undertaken all charges: if you are poor, to supply you; if you are ignorant, to teach you; if you are perplexed, to guide you; if you are hurt, to avenge you; if you are calumniated, to vindicate you; if you are sad, to cheer you; if you fall, to lift you up again; if you could die, to revive you. On Him you lean always, to Him you speak every moment every secret, from Him you hear the softest accents, as though there were no other but He and you only in the world; you are His, and He has made you beautiful in His own eyes, and in His Father’s eyes, and in the eyes of all that is pure and good in either world; and He has robed you with the most costly arrayment, and He has decked you with the loveliest of jewels, and He has brought you to sit down in His banqueting-house which He has prepared for you, and He holds you up to the admiration

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of His creatures. And all that is His is yours; He has made over to you, by the surest title-deeds, the whole property of heaven and of earth. And more, He has given you Himself. He is yours, He has written upon you His own new name; He has identified you with all His interests, and all His happinesses, and all His hopes. He will never rest without you at His side, but you shall look in His face, and you shall say those dear, happy words for ever, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His,' for you shall never be divided.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Daniel's Self-Denial.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. . . . But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.
DANIEL i. 5, 8.



THE opening chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel contains the key and clew to all that follows, for it tells us of what stuff that man was made who gives his name to the book. It introduces us to the Jewish captivity in Babylon, when Nebuchadnezzar, the king, after successfully besieging Jerusalem, and taking Jehoiakim prisoner, carried off to Babylon, among other things and persons, the gold and silver of the temple, and the *élite* of the young men of Judah, the choicest of the young men for character and ability, to be trained for the service of their new master. 'Children in whom was no blemish, but well-favoured and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the wisdom of the Chaldeans.' The policy of Nebuchadnezzar must be admitted to have been admirable. He clearly wished to avail himself in the interest of his own kingdom, of the best talent and capability of the kingdom he had conquered. He first of all chose out the best material, and then proceeded (as he hoped) to subject it to the habits and discipline which should naturalise it in its new country. As he had poured the treasure taken from the temple of the God of Israel into the temple of his own god, so he hoped to adapt the human treasure he had acquired to the purposes of his

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religion and its institutions. His object clearly was to take these young men, Daniel, and his three companions (familiarily known to us by the names of their adoption, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego), and by exposing them to influences as different as possible from those of the race they came of, to acclimatise them gradually to the language, the learning, the manners, and the morals of their new country. He thought they might be cured, not only of all home-sickness, as ordinarily understood—the wasting regret and longing for Zion, and the God of Zion—but of those home ideas and affections which are at the root of all patriotism worthy of the name.

I. And among other means which the sagacity of their royal master devised for the accomplishment of this purpose, was that they should be fed, as well as taught, after a fashion to which they were not born. Besides the learning and the wisdom of the Chaldeans that was to be daily instilled into them, they were to be provided daily with food from the king's table, that fine wheaten bread, and game, and exquisite wine, which we know to have been the prerogative of these Oriental sovereigns. Nominally, the motive assigned for this special treatment of his prisoners was that they should grow physically strong and well-liking; that they should be well nourished as befitted the attendants of a court. But can we doubt that the wily king was not regarding only the bodily condition of his pupils, but knew well enough that if he could but once acclimatise them in this respect also, if he could once foster a liking, an appetite for these flesh-pots of Babylon, and make these things, at first luxuries, to become in time necessities, he would have gained a still closer hold upon the future services of his young counsellors and administrators? And he had no suspicion that the body and the mind, or whatever he held to be the seat and origin of wisdom, needed any separate treatment and regimen. Doubtless he honestly believed that body, soul and spirit would thrive alike, and together, upon this more generous diet. It lay altogether outside of his philosophy that dainty bits may

‘Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.’

But he little knew the man with whom he was dealing. The young student in the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans may well have felt the temptations of his novel position, for the brain is not independent of the rest of the animal economy, and the stimulant and support of the king's meat might have seemed even necessary and allowable to sustain him in the ardent pursuit of this new learning. But he had a past experience to which he could appeal. He had laboured and striven thus far upon simpler fare, and he would make no change, ‘he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he

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drank.' And when the officer who had them in his charge was afraid not to carry out the king's orders, and remonstrated, 'why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort?' the answer was ready: We can work and serve the king, not worse, but better, on the food we have been used to, on which we have hitherto learned the great lessons of life. 'Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.'

Which things are an allegory, not the less so because they are incidents in the actual experience of a great man who once lived and left his mark upon his time and country. They are one of the memorable declarations in the history of man as a spiritual being, of the eternal connection between plain living and high thinking.

II. But I have said that this history is for us an allegory. The king's house, and the king's meat have a wide-reaching moral and meaning. The very name of Babylon itself has already, in the vivid imagination of men, been seized upon to express certain modern parallels. The great metropolis was long ago nicknamed the 'modern Babylon,' and in its wealth and splendour, in the height to which the arts and resources of human capacity have been cultivated, the parallel is ingenious and happy. But the parallel has another side to it than that of wealth and the cultivation of the liberal arts. We shall miss altogether the deeper lessons of the story of Daniel, unless we recognise strongly that Babylon, for us, is not a city or a place at all, but a spirit, the spirit of our habitual surroundings. The ideals, the habits, the standards, the hopes and fears, among which we are content to live; the atmosphere of which we are content to breathe; these constitute for us, whether we are young men, just arrived like Daniel from purer, wholesomer surroundings, into the glare and glitter, the luxury and beauty, the stimulating food, and the stimulating culture and ideas, of some new centre of life and action; or whether we are living and travelling elsewhere (for we change our climate but not ourselves, for all the seas we cross) these constitute for us our Babylon. There may be no defined and concrete head and king of this country, no one building that can be called the king's house; no one diet that can be called 'the king's meat.' Yet there is a governing power which we may be living in subjection to, though we do not see anywhere set down its rules and codes; there is an abode, within whose walls or jurisdiction we may be cabined, cribbed, confined; and there is a nourishment, on which, if we try to support the life given us, we may grow skilful in all the learning of Chaldeans, but not in all the wisdom of God.

III. To live in Babylon, and yet to be the true citizen of a far different country; to be in the world, yet not of it; this is for us the translation of Daniel's action with regard to the king's meat.

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The very object and design of supporting him from the king's table was to wean him from the food of his native land. He was pressed to eat it in order that he might exchange the knowledge of Zion for that of Babylon. And he would not defile himself by so doing. He would live apart, with the nourishment and the associations that were bound up with the service of a very different master; lest in this new world of his exile he should forget the imperial palace whence he came. The refusal of Daniel was the counterpart of the refusal of the citizens in the parable to acknowledge the headship of Christ. The resolve of Daniel and his companions was just this, 'Though we are in the country, and the policy, and the religion of Nebuchadnezzar, we will not have this man to reign over us.' And in order that they might preserve their faith in their own God, they would not live a life that was organically bound up with the god of Nebuchadnezzar. For that would be to serve two masters; and two masters men cannot serve. This must surely be the primary lesson of the story of Daniel; the lesson which sounds, when so put, a truism, and one of the most obvious of truisms. As long as we conceive of two masters, only as defined individual forms, two rival kings, two rival lawgivers, two rival religions or opposing moralities, it seems the clearest of all clear things that the service of two is irreconcilable and an impossibility. But the great saying of our Lord was not so framed; He said, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' There was and is no such personality as mammon. Jesus used the word as a personification, not for wealth merely, but for all that wealth leads to and encourages; the splendour, whether material or intellectual, that makes the attractiveness of Babylon. And this abstraction, this diffused and intangible influence and contagion, abroad in the world, and in the very air we breathe, this, hardly discernible by the eye and sense, may yet be the hardest of hard masters, and the very rival of God Himself. For if we serve it, we cannot serve Him.

IV. There are many Babylons in which it may fall to our lot to take up our abode, and make choice of our life's gods. There are the Babylons of great cities, where boundless wealth and luxury are found, and boundless pleasure for eye, and ear, and fancy. There are the Babylons (may we not say it?) of great centres of education, where the god of the country takes a fairer and loftier shape—the god of knowledge—the Nebo—the god of the learning of the Chaldeans. It is not the grosser idolatries, the rites of Baal and Ashtaroth, that the nobler and better spirits among us have to guard against, but the more specious idolatry of things in themselves justly beautiful and engaging, the ever-developing knowledge and culture of a still growing civilisation. Not idols, not necessarily idols, unless they have dethroned the likeness of the true Father of our spirits; unless they

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have intercepted the light that once came down from Him to lighten every man that is born into the world. Difficult it is, we know it, in any strength of our own to live in Babylon, and not to be of Babylon. So difficult, unless we set ourselves, with the ever-shadowing might of a power not our own, to walk with God. To traverse the common ways of men, and eat temperately of their common meat, and to do the duties and pursue the studies that are the immediate purpose of our being here, and yet to be strengthened by another food that the world knows not of; this is to live as Daniel lived, and those two whom the prophet Ezekiel coupled with him as the typical children of God: 'these three men; Noah, Daniel, and Job.' Noah, the man who, in the midst of his own corrupt civilisation, walked with God. Daniel, who, in the land of the stranger, carried with him his native air of piety and purity. And Job, the man who, assailed by the sophistries of his well-meaning friends, yet would not distrust God, because he had convictions based upon a life's experience, and they had only the conclusions of a neatly constructed religious theory.

CANON AINGER.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Inspiration.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

I.  T is well known that the Jews divided their sacred writings into three classes, which are sufficiently indicated by the expression in our Lord's statement to His disciples that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him. Those three classes, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms and sacred writings, were regarded as representing different degrees or kinds of divine influence. The law was regarded as actually dictated, if not written, by God Himself, and the extent to which this dictation was conceived to extend is strikingly illustrated by the pathetic conception that the account of the death of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy was written down by Moses at the divine dictation. But with the prophets and Psalms it was recognised that the

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individual personality of the inspired person was maintained, however it might be overpowered by the Divine Spirit. This individuality was regarded as still more distinctly preserved in the case of the Psalms, and, on the whole, the ancient Rabbis seem to have combined with a profound recognition of the divine supremacy in the production of the Scriptures a clear sense of the reality of human co-operation. But a different conception arose in Alexandria, probably from association with the heathen conception of divine influence. The Greek idea of divine communications was associated with that of a sort of ecstasy in which the priest or priestess lost all self-consciousness, all self-control, and became the mere passive organ of the Divine influence, just as the musical instrument is struck by the hands of the musician and has no independent action of itself. A similar conception is found in one of the earlier Christian fathers who had been brought up under the influence of Greek philosophy. Justin Martyr, for instance, expressly speaks of the divine influence resting on the prophets as the plectrum on the lyre. But this conception of ecstatic prophecy became discredited in the Christian Church in the second century, by the enthusiastic sect of Monotheists, who claimed to be endued with a new gift of divine inspiration, and whose prophets exhibited similar convulsive and ecstatic symptoms to those which have marked recent manifestations among ourselves. The result was that S. Paul's statement that in true prophecy, 'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,' came to be recognised as a test of genuine divine influence, and Origen, who rendered such incalculable services to the cause of Scripture and divine interpretation, notwithstanding some extravagances, enunciated a very remarkable doctrine on this subject, namely, that inspiration involves an enhanced activity of the human spirit effected by the action of the Divine Spirit upon it; the Spirit of God, that is to say, when it breathes into a soul, does not act as an anæsthetic; it calls into action the full powers of the heart and the mind, and the fullest human powers.

II. Any extreme theory of inspiration would appear to be refuted by one single consideration, which has also an important bearing upon other controversies connected with the subject. I mean the undoubted variations of a very marked character between the text of the Septuagint and that of the extra Hebrew manuscripts. One illustration will be sufficient for our purpose. In the narrative of David's early life, and in particular his conflict with Goliath, there appears in our English Bibles what seems a singular inconsistency. At the end of one chapter David is represented as in a favoured position at the court of Saul, and Saul is described as being attached to him; but when, in the next chapter, he encounters Goliath, Saul

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is represented as having no knowledge of him, and inquiring whose son this stripling is. It is a remarkable fact that the verses constituting a considerable portion of the chapter about Goliath, from which the difficulty arises, do not exist in one of the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint version at all; but that manuscript would seem to be a clear witness to the Hebrew manuscripts which were current at the same time or before it, that is to say, in the fourth century of our era; and it is to be borne in mind that no Hebrew manuscript in existence is of an earlier date than the eighth century of our own era. On ordinary principles of criticism this Septuagint manuscript may be assumed to be equal to the other.

Two conclusions of consequence to the argument seem to follow from such a fact. One is that it can be of little practical purpose to dispute as to the literal inspiration of the text of the Scriptures, when it is indisputable as a matter of fact that we do not possess adequate evidence of that original state of the text. There is abundant ground for assurance that we possess the substance of the text in sufficient correctness for all purposes of practice, but it can be of no use to speak of literal inspiration if you have not got the letter, and that is what appears clearly disproved in such a conflict of texts.

The other conclusion, and more important and practical one, would seem to be that it is no part of Divine Providence to ensure minute accuracy in every detail of the sacred records. That accuracy, as a matter of fact, so far as secondary details are concerned, has clearly not been preserved. If we take the New Testament we find the same phenomenon in a most conspicuous manner, as affecting the most solemn and most important records of that book; I mean, the record of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Even in this momentous matter, around which such intense controversy has raged in the Christian Church, there remain variations in detail. But what does this point to but the fact that the presence, the supremacy of the Divine Spirit, is compatible, as common sense would have suggested to us, with variations and imperfections in detail? To use an illustration from Hooker, which I will presently quote for another purpose, a man's nature may be complete for all essential purposes though his body may be marred by some imperfections. That which we are assured of is, that in all points essential to the practical and substantial truth of their communications, the writers of the Scriptures were preserved by the divine superintendence from error, and that the Spirit of God so quickened and inspired all their faculties as to enable them to feel more truly, to see more clearly, and to speak more forcibly, than would have been possible by human action alone. To that statement of the doctrine no modern discoveries of any kind

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are in opposition, while on the contrary, a succession of discoveries during the past fifty years, and excavations in every country to which the Bible narratives refer, have confirmed their truth in a most marvellous manner. Only last year a German scholar, in his commentary on Genesis, quoted with approbation a statement of Sir Henry Rawlinson, that the genealogy of the nations in Genesis has, by advancing investigation, received such brilliant confirmation that it may be with full justice said that it is the most authentic record we possess of the relation of the filiation of the creations of the earth. Those variations for the text, of which I have given an instance, ought to be sufficient to show how precarious are any objections to the general trustworthiness of a book like the Old Testament drawn from detail. But in the substantial accuracy of historic truth, both the Old and New Testament have stood the severe ordeal of all this century with amazing stability. They stand it still. And if so we have only to recur to that reasonable theory of inspiration which, as we have seen, was held in the best days of the Christian Church, and was in harmony with the best Jewish thought, and we may confidently rely, with those reasonable qualifications to be attached to all human language, upon S. Paul's assurance that all Scripture is inspired by God, for, as Hooker says, 'All those writings which contain in them the law of God, all those venerable books of Scripture, all those sacred tomes and volumes of Holy Writ, they are with such perfection framed that in them there is nothing lacking the lack of which would deprive us of life;' and, again, 'There is in Scripture, therefore, no defect but that any man, what place or calling soever he holdeth in the Church of God, may have thereby the light of his natural understanding so perfected that, the one being relieved by the other, he can want no part of needful instruction or any good work which God Himself requireth, whether it be natural or supernatural.'

H. WACE.

Liberty of the Christian Life.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. S. JOHN viii. 36.

I WANT to try to point you to the power of Christ, by which He liberates the human soul and sends it forth into this larger destiny. I am glad to speak of Christ my Master thus, because so often in Christendom it has seemed as if Christ were the enslaver of mankind, as if He went among men as He went through the Temple, with a lash, rebuking men simply for their iniquities; as if He were continually uttering the great 'Thou shalt not' of prohibition,

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telling men what they must not do, and rebuking them for their wrong acts. This is but the subordinate message of Him who comes to us with the Gospel of Christianity. His great message is that of freedom and of a larger life; and every breaking away of any one from slavery, as I hope we shall see, is but the preliminary to the opening of some larger chamber of the human life. What shall we say, then, when we speak of Christ as the liberator of mankind—Christ the great giver of liberty?

I. We say, in the first place, that it is absolutely impossible that any man shall give to another man that which he does not himself possess; that it is impossible that any man shall open the prison door from the inside, unless he have the key in his own hand. But one comes from the outside, from the region of liberty, and opens the prison doors to those who are shut up within. Therefore, when we think of the liberty which Christ gives, and of the larger life which Christ opens to us, we think, first of all, of the liberty which belongs to Him.

II. There comes another part of the richness of His life. He is absolutely free from the thralldom of sin because life is so rich and interesting to Him. I think—and you will perhaps agree with me—that some of you could furnish me with illustrations out of your own experience that, perhaps, I will not be able to furnish you out of mine. I think that one of the reasons why men hold to sin, why men go on in habits which they themselves despise, is that they are somehow afraid that there does not lie outside of that region of life anything that would interest them in vitality. They think of the old phrase that has been tossed to and fro upon the lips of men in all these years, when the young man has called it seeing life, when he has gone into the depths of iniquity, when he has waded through the mire and slime of every profligate and degraded habit. There is just exactly the key to what I mean. A young man calls that thing seeing life. What did Jesus Christ call seeing life? He lifted up His eyes, and looked abroad, and life was full of the Spirit of His Father, and intensely interesting to Him, absorbing in every direction. There never came a fear to Him lest, if He were not profligate, abandoning His life to luxury, and idleness and sin, the world would pall upon Him, and there would be nothing left for Him to do, nothing left for those hands that were for ever being claimed by human need; nothing left for those feet that were for ever being summoned to errands which they could not refuse, in order to accomplish which they must leave everything else behind; nothing left for those eyes to see, when there was the deeper truth of God's love and the deeper depth of human nature for them to be looking into every moment. Ah! my friends, if there is any delusion in a man's soul that Jesus

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Christ dispels, is it not that, that life has no interest apart from profligacy, frivolity, and sin? He who knows the true interest of life enters into the freedom of Christ, and leaves the stains behind him slipping from his garments, and goes forth into the full light of the freedom of God.

III. Then, I think another of the great freedoms of Jesus was His freedom from those things which are perpetually holding us down because they are so subtle and deep—the freedom from the ordinary traditions of society. Jesus stepped right across the traditions of Jerusalem. And yet, is it not wonderful, have you ever thought how there is in Jesus not the least signs of defiance? He is not one of your light-blooded people who think that virtue consists in defying the conventionalities by which a man is surrounded. That is purely negative. There was the absolutely positive in Jesus Christ; and because He was absorbed in those truths which lie at the very bottom of all things, He could afford to be regardless of the traditions which had come down and which constituted so much of the life of the men that were around Him. Jesus was the great radical. Why? Because He was truly conservative. Conservatism and radicalism, far as they seem to be from one another upon the surface of our life, come together and meet, and are one at the bottom of our life. No man can be a true conservative who has not hold upon the fundamental principles and the eternal truths of the universe; and no man can be a real radical who is not preserving those truths, and insisting that in them lies the perplexity of human happiness and human goodness.

Another wonderful thing about Christ is that in His day He was the disturber of things; but what is He to-day? The revolutionary man seems to see Christ having no share in his disturbances; and the conservative man, as we call him—the man who desires the perpetuity of society, who is apt to call himself a Christian—simply gives all the solid conservatism that is in his life to the Church of Jesus Christ, which was once the most radical and disturbing element in our human society. What is it to-day but very often the home into which old abuses creep, and where men keep themselves quiet and dumb and blind from seeing the flagrant enormities and the prevalent needs of the time? There is the difference between the Church of to-day and the Church of Christ in His day, who carried the Church within His own divine and human bosom; who could defy the traditions by which He was surrounded, simply because He had His peculiar abiding-place within the truths of which those traditions pretended to be the embodiments, and of which they were very often the corruptions and the misrepresentations.

Jesus Christ is positive and not negative. Liberty, and not

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slavery, you see entirely in His escape. I love to think of that calm figure, walking majestically because it is so absolutely calm, through the perplexed and troubled and feverish streets, as if He stood to-day and rebuked you, why? Not for doing the things which you are doing; not for being occupied with the details of life which have been thrust into your hands, and which you have constantly to do with; but for being the slaves where you ought to be the masters; for being ruled by the things which you ought to have under your control. Here He stands the poor Christ, the calm Christ, the simple Christ, in the midst of our riches, and our agitation and our complexity and our artificialness and our slowness of life. Here He stands; and you come to worship Him. What must it mean? What must it mean that you rich men have come and bowed down here before the poor Jesus Christ? What must it mean that you have come out of your gorgeous houses, and have come to kneel and bow down before Him who had not where to lay His head? Does it mean that your gorgeous houses and your rich luxury is wrong? No, no! But it does mean that you have found in Him something that is greater; and unless you go away clear in the sense that He, and that which He represents, is greater, you have lost the lesson of His teaching, you have lost the presence of His life.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Circumspection. It does not suffice to do good: we must do it with circumspection, after we have considered how, when, where, EPHESIANS v. 15. and why we should thus act.

Time. No man can be provident of his time who is not prudent EPHESIANS v. 15. in the choice of his company.

Time is the parent of truth.

Time gained. MAKE the most of time, it flies away so fast: yet method by method. will teach you to win time.

Loss of Time. THE greatest loss of time is delay and expectation, which depends upon the future. We let go the present, which S. MATTHEW
xxi. 28. we have in our power, and look forward to that which depends upon chance, and so quit a certainty for an uncertainty.

It is better to lose anything than to lose time; we can recover lost money, but time is irrecoverable.

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Use of Time. TIME is like a ship which never anchors. While I am abroad I had better do those things which may advantage me at my landing, than practise such as shall cause my conviction when I come to the shore.

Waste of Time. THOSE that lose a day are dangerously prodigal; those that dare misspend it, desperate. ✓

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	EPHESIANS VI. 10-20.
GOSPEL,	S. JOHN IV. 46-54.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	DANIEL III.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	DANIEL IV. OR V.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Worship of the Golden Image.

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. DANIEL iii. 25.



SUPPOSE that if any one had to select the brightest and the happiest scene of all history, sacred or profane, it would be the Transfiguration on the mountain of Tabor.

I suppose that if any one had to select the darkest and saddest passage, he could not find a darker or a sadder than the three young men cast, bound, into the midst of that 'burning fiery furnace,' heated sevenfold.

But now observe the effects.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, there were also three men, S. Peter, S. James, and S. John. They 'saw the excellent glory'; they listened to the thrilling discourse of Jesus and His saints; they heard, what S. Peter, finding all words too weak, describes as 'such a voice from heaven.'

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And how were those three men affected? Were they deeply interested, and very vigilant? They were 'heavy with sleep'! Were they full of joy? They were 'sore afraid'! Was their intellect illumined? They 'wist not what was said'! Did they speak wisely? Their words were utterly foolish!

Now look at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire. The flames, which were to consume them, have only burnt their fetters, and they are quite free. They walk the furnace in perfect liberty. Not a hair is singed, nor the sheen of their coats changed, nor the smell of fire has passed upon them. An angel—we have Nebuchadnezzar's authority for saying it—an angel waited on them; the Son of God Himself was there, real, manifest, distinct.

It is clear that that dungeon of fire was a little sanctuary. All holy things were there. No sleep, no fear, no foolish words. It is all perfect peace. And it would be the brightest spot of memory, in all the retrospect of life, to those three youths. And, what was best of all, they glorified God. The king himself, for their sake, blessed their God; and the decree went forth that the people of every nation and language should honour the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Which was the best? Which was the happiest? The mount of Transfiguration, tipped with effulgent glory, or Nebuchadnezzar's 'burning fiery furnace'?

Life is full of such strange contrasts, and such speaking paradoxes. Its deserts have been sweeter than its gardens; its solitudes than its best companies. The poor have been the rich ones, and the weakest have been the giants. 'The lame have taken the prey,' and the slow have outstripped the fast. The first have been last, and the last have been first. There hath been more joy in some tears than in all the laughter. And dying moments have had more real life than all living days.

For so, God crosses man's hands, and reverses the blessings, to confound us, that He may stand out alone in His sovereignty and grace.

There are many gay things which are going on in this place. Wealth spreads its pageant; and the beauteous and the glittering glance up and down to gain men's smile; and kind, flattering words pass pleasantly. And there is amusement everywhere. And all the day, and half the night, you change your excitement, and many an undercurrent of loving hope flows cheerily in throbbing hearts, and you walk amid the flowers, and all life's surface is passing merrily.

And not far behind, a very little way out of sight, in this same place, there are sick-chambers, rooms with their shaded light, and pallid faces which look at one another dreamily, and tell of more

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than they like to speak. And empty seats, which can never be filled again.

But in that throng of mirth, and that world of fashion, one, who has learnt to read it right, sees there is a want. Those hearts are not satisfied. They have no resting-place. They are trying to get, where they never find it, something which they never define. Their souls are too large for the life they are leading; and they stretch on to limits beyond them.

And they have cares and thoughts, which they know not where to cast, and memories, which press heavily for lack of refuge and sympathy.

While in those saddened scenes of pain and sorrow, there is a presence which dispels the shadows. There may be no mirth, but there is peace, 'perfect peace,' and a quiet mind, and a holy radiance, and the best and the purest converse of the soul, and communion more real than the society of this world ever gave. And heaven is near. And sin has no bonds, and fear no fetters. But their hearts will soar away from the trammels of the body; and the pain seems scarcely to touch them, nor the grave to reach them. For it is Jesus and His rest!

And say again, which is best, the fashion, or the affliction? the gaudy colours, or the sombre hues? the noisy surface, or the still, deep places? the world, or Christ?

It was not only on 'the plain of Dura' that there has been set up 'an image of gold' for worship.

At this moment, if I am informed rightly, the greed of money is everywhere. Never so great. It is the idol of business, and thousands and thousands worship its possessors.

And the world—the world, how it shows the universality of foolish pleasures and empty occupations! The world—'the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—bodily gratification, dress, and equipage, and all pretty things; and the costliness of entertainments, and the grandeur of living, and the ostentation of pride, rank, and dignity—'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—the world, the world is in every place. No grade of society, no circle of life, no age, no spot, but it has its world!

The very Church has its world—increasingly the world—all worldly adjuncts to make up its worship. No separation from the world's frivolity. The Church and the world are, now-a-days, in a strange accord. And every one likes to have it so.

And the crowd that gather round 'the golden image,' and prostrate themselves before it, and the sympathy of numbers, tells from man to man; and the fascination, and the crowd, and the music, and the heated imagination, and the strong enthusiasm lends its charm. And

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there are very few who can help but bow where all consent to call it true.

Meanwhile, as in Dura, so in every place, there are those whose answer to the Protean world, in all its shapes, is, 'We will not serve thy god, nor worship the image thou hast set up.'

A small number—a little remnant of firm, strong, loyal hearts—which own one Master, and cleave to one truth. They have given their hearts to Christ, and they allow no rival. In Him they have found all they need; and they cannot leave Him.

And strong faith has been given them, and they are not afraid, even at the furnace-gate. They care not, though they stand alone. And they are well content, for the love they have received and the love they feel, to brave all consequences, even to the death!

And what consequences? Now understand this. So long as you go on—in a worldly, unconverted way, flowing with the stream—you may have no special trials. But as soon as ever you begin to confess Christ, and take a bold and independent stand on God's side, three things will follow it. The world will turn against you; Satan's jealousy will be stirred to get rid—if he can—of you, and the Christ in you, and the influence of Christ in you, either by your apostasy, or by some deep fall, or by your destruction; and God Himself—careful for your young growth, using either the world, or Satan, for this purpose—will discipline you, and prove you, and afflict you, to do you good—to draw out and increase the grace that is in you.

Hence, the almost universal law that, where real religion begins, trouble begins. It is the children of God who go into 'the furnace'; and the greater the saint that is to be, the hotter the fire! Observe the distinction, 'The fining-pot for silver; the furnace for gold.'

And do not wonder if you find it heated for you seven-fold; for, from the moment of your conversion, you have to do with a great God; a great God in everything: very great in His comforting, very great in His chastening.

Do you ask, Of what the fire will be composed? Shame, scorn, misrepresentation, worldly losses, pain, sickness, loneliness, bereavement! But much more than this. Remorse, inward conflicts, spiritual shafts of Satan, terrors of mind, horrid shapes of unbelief! These make the fire. Flames within you, flames without you, raging upon an imprisoned soul!

You may never have felt it; perhaps you never will. For the experiences of God's children are infinitely various. But have we not cause to ask ourselves, if we have not the trials, have we been as faithful as we ought, to Christ? Would not more faithfulness have brought more persecution?

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But there are those who can tell of a furnace which they have felt, as fierce as Nebuchadnezzar's hottest fires, and fiercer too. And the higher the saint, the keener has been the furnace.

But let those who have been in that furnace write its history: 'We went in bound; but we found a liberty, such as we never conceived or felt before. There was such sympathy with Jesus. He walked with us, and we with Him, through the fire. Chains of the flesh were burnt away in flames which had their mission for that very end; and, when they had done it, could do no more. The fastenings of this world were loosened; and the more our bodies were confined, the more our spirits mounted. And the light of the Christ that was there, outshone far the tormenting elements, and we heeded them not; for we saw more of Him, and felt Him near. There was more nearness there than ever in the world's bright sunshine. And it was so beautiful there, so tender, so strong! All the Man, and all the God. And He was praised in the sweet calm He gave. Men saw, and marvelled at His grace. And when we came forth, so happy and unscathed, we carried an experience, which enabled us for all future conflicts, and raised us, at that moment, far above life's little things. And all "took knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus." And many more in every age, knowing our deliverance and our peace, were the more brave to serve and suffer for His dear Name.'

That is the furnace which Christ's presence softens. Have you Christ's presence? Without Christ, is not heaven hell? With Christ, is not hell heaven?

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Battle of Life.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. EPHESIANS VI. 12.



THE battle of life' is a metaphor which almost all men at some time in their lives realise and own as true. It suggests a picture which recalls to almost every man his own history, if it has been at all an earnest life. We may think that it has not been so with other men; we may look at some bright and smiling life, and say with something of envy, with something also almost like reproach in our tone, 'Lo, life has no battle for him! Behold how

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smooth and easy all the world has been for him !' The man himself knows better. And we, if we come close to him, can see the scars, nay, we can hear the battle of his life still going on. But whether we come close enough to him to know the real truth of his life or not, we know the truth about our own. Life is a battle. For ever on the watch against our enemies, for ever guarding our own lives, for ever watching our chance for an attack upon the foe—so we all live if we are earnest men.

But metaphors are delusive, and if we cling too long and closely to them they grow tiresome. They are very apt often to blind us to the need of careful definition and discrimination. This metaphor, for instance—life a battle—may seem so satisfactory that it may lead us to forget that there are all kinds of battles, that we do not know much about a battle until we understand who the enemy is and what the weapons are. Two tribes of savages hewing away at each other in the jungle, the host of crusaders contending with the soldiers of the prophets on the great plain of Galilee, the Swiss peasants fighting for freedom in their mountain fastnesses, our soldiers struggling with rebellion—all these are battles ; but how different they are ! Evidently, before the old metaphor, ' the battle of life,' can mean anything very definite or practical to us, we must open it with the sharp knife of a question. We must ask who is the enemy with whom the battle of life is being fought.

The answers which will come are very various, and more than one answer will be true.

There can be little doubt of what S. Paul meant when he first used the word. His thought is perfectly distinct and clear. He cries to his Ephesians, ' You are fighting with principalities and powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly regions, in the sky or air.' They are lofty words, and they are very definite. He is thinking of evil spirits. He believes distinctly in a universe all full of unseen forces. To him goodness, morality, was the first condition of all life. Here on this earth or anywhere beyond the stars, to be good must be the first condition of all strength. He who was good, he who was trying to be good, entered thereby into friendly confederation with all the noble forces of the universe, and bid defiance to all the evil powers of the sky and air. For him all good beings fought ; against his simple righteousness all evil beings would beat themselves in vain, and ultimately must go down and fail, here or beyond the stars. That is a noble faith. In the simplicity and grandeur of a faith like that, man will some day come once more to the now almost lost belief in the connection of his life with unseen spiritual powers.

It is good, no doubt, that two strifes, the outer and the inner, the

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strife with self and the strife with the world's sin, should go on together. The man who knew no enemy within himself, who was so absorbed in fighting with the world's sin that he grew unconscious of his own inner life, by and by would become arrogant and superficial. Such men the world has often seen among its philanthropists. The man who is totally wrapped up in the war within him, the war with himself for his own life, grows selfish and grows morbid. The two must go on together. Each keeps the other healthy and true. Fight with your own sin, and let that fight keep you humble and full of sympathy when you go out into the world and strike at the sin of which the world is full. Fight with the world's sin, and let the needs of that fight make you aware of how much is wrong, and make you eager that everything shall be right within yourself. Here is the balance and mutual ministry of self-care and world-care which makes the truest man the healthiest philanthropist.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The Bonds of S. Paul.

For which I am an ambassador in bonds. EPHESIANS vi. 20.

I. **A**N ambassador in bonds! Of all the paradoxes is not this the strangest? How different are the first suggestions of that high title. What pomp and pageantry, what visible pride of conscious authority, what obeisance of courteous reception, what glad welcome or reverential awe! But hardly a prison and a chain.

What an envoy was this! Paul the veteran, 'an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.' Of what a kingdom! none less than τὰ ἐπουράνια, 'the heavenlies.' With what a commission! The dispensation of the mystery that had been hid from all ages and generations. And all the stranger is it, if we press home the word ambassador, as standing here by no mere figure, but in fact; not for the mere interpreter of a theory, but as the personal messenger of a personal prince; the delegate of the Kingdom of Heaven linked by a chain to Cæsar's guardsman.

Is the paradox hereby heightened? or is it just in this thought of his Master that the enigma of the humiliation is partly resolved? The enigma not only of a Paul in bonds, but of all that inherit him; of the Church herself, for to her let us now pass, not the abstract or ideal, which is the kingdom, but the concrete and visible, all the congregation of faithful men east and west, which is the ambassador. Has not this been her solace, as she seemed to stand perennially in bonds; in bonds often of oppression and long travail, in bonds always

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of very human limitations? King though her Master be, yet He left a work to be wrought out on no new transcendental lines, but on those principles and by those applications of eternal verities to human conditions in which He had Himself stooped to lead the way. 'My kingdom is not of this world'; shall then its ambassadors look to be ever really free amid their temporal and terrestrial surroundings? 'Made perfect through suffering'; and shall not the servant be as his Lord? 'When I am weak, then am I strong'; thus the great Apostle fulfilled the same law to which his Master had submitted, and shall the Church he moulded be exempt? If that strength is to be no illusion, shall not the weakness also be often very real?

This thought will go a long way: for an ideally consistent Church on earth it might cover the whole ground of our paradox. But it is to a very earthly vessel that the charge has been consigned, and we shall have sometimes to take account of other bonds in our catalogue, not only the bonds of flesh and blood, but the load of human frailties and passions, the infection of alien fallacies and fashions, and sometimes, too, the trammels of a perilous prosperity counterfeiting freedom, or the weight of her own exuberant ascendancy.

II. 'Our Jerusalem that now is' is certainly not yet free. The heavenly force is conditioned by an earthly environment. But it may well be that fetters rather than freedom are after all the very means appointed for her gradual progress and development.

There are epochs of the Church in which history displays only spiritual stagnation on the surface, while a strange inversion brings the least Christ-like or Paul-like figures to the top, though a nameless thread of vigorous life somewhere beneath must have been hid with God. There were generations in which the 'religion of her ostensible leaders was based not so much on the foundation of Christ as on the philosophy of Aristotle.' And one man asks whether the profligacy of tenth century popes, or the rack and stake and their moral substitutes are to be classed as examples of the corruption of the Church when free from wholesome constraint and spoiled by worldly success, or of the subjection of the more genuine core of the Church to the chastening discipline of an Egyptian servitude? Or another will ask whether royal supremacy and state support are really guarantees not lightly to be sacrificed of her dignity and stability, or are, as some would plead, but trusses and guiding-irons of a growing tree or branch, helpful fetters for a few centuries, yet fetters still? Such vexed questions we cannot now discuss, but only repeat what few would dispute, that oftentimes she has been really weakest when she seemed most strong, strongest when most weak.

III. In your character of witnesses and ambassadors of the kingdom you may still have to learn something of the fetters and checks in

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which you must needs work and move, some to be accepted as inevitable, some to be chosen as salutary. There are, I suppose, at the outset, the common inheritance, the Baconian idola of the tribe, the cave, the mart, the theatre; those prejudices inherent in the race, in the individual, in custom, in system. The meshes of these a strong man may himself burst through, and yet find they must be reckoned with in the hostility or the *vis inertiae* of the world around him, in things spiritual as well as things scientific. There are the checks on free-will to be struggled with, the spells of heredity, and of a man's special place in the social growth of centuries, which the ordinary worker finds as hard to evade as his own shadow. And there are perhaps its own bonds lying on each generation, which though half recognised and half worn through, must wait a while for their destined genius to rive them quite asunder. There have been many epochs of religious movements as well as secular in which men a little in advance of their age have been hampered with fetters unknown to their sons or grandsons; and though all conventions are not fetters, nor all novelties the truth, yet all reformers and most discoverers have been heavily weighted by the dulness or rancour of their time.

But besides necessary bonds, how many constraints and trammels must be voluntarily welcomed by the rank and file if good work is to be done in a crowded world? 'His soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' will now more rarely than ever fit the busy worker.

Shackles inevitable of time, and space, and mortal flesh; iron chains laid upon us by fortune or foemen; golden manacles of conscience and a royal command; these the ambassador shall proudly wear, and yet find the service of his King is perfect freedom. Bonds of allegiance, of brotherhood, of peace, may these too all be yours. But far from you all in the coming years of your good work, be the crippling memory of ill-spent days; far from you be the paralysing weight of some wilful sin, once looked at in the face, too late.


J. ROBERTSON.

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III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Reward of Weak Faith.

The nobleman said unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. S. JOHN iv. 48, 49.

I.  HE lesson we learn from this miracle appears to be that Jesus rewards much lower degrees of faith than we should perhaps have expected. Here was one who had come twenty miles to ask for the restoration of his child. This showed considerable faith to make him take such a journey. And he seemed to believe that Jesus could heal only when He was present. Now this is in very strong contrast with the faith of the centurion in S. Matt. viii., the Gospel for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, where the centurion says to Jesus, 'I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.' This was treating our Lord far more as if He were God, and had all power everywhere in every place at His disposal.

II. It is somewhat difficult to explain in what sense we are to take the words of Christ, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' The man certainly believed that our Lord could, and yet, apparently, only when He was present. What signs did he require? Chrysostom supposes that he had but half a belief, that he came to our Lord in a sort of tentative way; and that it was only when, from the account of his servant as to the time that the fever left the child with the time that the Lord uttered the words, 'Thy son liveth,' that he truly believed to the salvation of his soul. This coincidence of his son's restoration with the Lord's words was the sign and wonder which his weak faith required. Considering the weakness of the faith in this age, even of the most faithful, we should take great encouragement from this account. It assures us that the Lord pities and helps the weakness of our faith.

M. F. SADLER.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Religion and Knowledge.

Men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. DANIEL iii. 4.
When He cometh, will He find faith on the earth? S. LUKE xviii. 8.



HERE is a very strange connection between these two passages of Scripture, spoken half a thousand years apart from one another. When the prophet saw the vision of the last days, the thing which made its impression upon his imagination was the wonderful quickening of intellectual activity. Men shall run to and fro, and there shall be a mighty increase in human knowledge. When the Saviour looked upon the same picture, it raised a question, apparently, in His mind as to whether the faith which He had come into the world to establish would be able to survive such increase of human knowledge. There is certainly not only a relation between these two passages, but there is also a relation between the two things themselves, between the increase of human knowledge and the persistence of the Christian faith.

It has been thought sometimes that the one is incompatible with the other. Or, at any rate, that the very worst possible condition for the subsistence of the faith of Christ is, or would be, a time when human knowledge would be greatly multiplied, when men would run to and fro characterised by that restlessness which always marks intellectual progress.

I. I beg to think for a moment how closely all our habits of Christian believing are bound up with the things which we learn from physical science, which belong to the sum-total of the world's knowledge.

When Copernicus enunciated his theory of the solar system, he did very much more than write books on astronomy. He changed the Christian religion as well. If you will think for a moment, you will see how. Suppose, as the world did suppose until a few centuries ago, that this earth was the very centre of all things, that the sun, an orb'd blaze, was a yard across its face, moving around it from day to day, and the moon, another attendant around it, with the diameter of half a dozen inches; that upon this earth, the one thing which stood pre-eminent for dignity and magnificence was man; and

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then you can easily understand how men believed that they were in very close and immediate relationship with God. For what was there between them? There was God, that sat there in the remote space. There were the angels, that had communication between God and man. And then men, who inhabited this earth, the most dignified, the greatest of all things, next to God Himself.

But now comes a new science which says to the human race, You are mistaken about the position you hold in the universe. Instead of your having your habitation upon the central orb about which all the rest wheel, you are simply little specks walking upon an insignificant fragment, in one of the farthest off and most remote corners of space; you must abdicate the honoured position which you had in the universe. As the world, the material world, was belittled, the human race was belittled with it. And so it was a natural step, although maybe a long step, from that position which man claimed for himself as being little higher than the apes. The step is a long one, but it is by no means an unnatural one. It is the necessary consequence of the dethronement of our race from the place which it supposed itself to hold in the universe.

Such a record as that contained in the holy Scripture lays more stress upon our faith than it did upon the faith of our forefathers. It does. The resurrection of the body, for example, was one thing before the laws of chemical metamorphosis were discovered, and is quite another thing now.

II. What shall we say to all this? Here stand the two terms of the problem. Knowledge has increased; faith, in a certain aspect, has decreased. What lies in the future? Is knowledge going on increasing, and is faith going on decreasing? or is it possible that we have misread the signs of the present time? I answer unquestionably, that the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is, by the very terms of its enunciation, bound to grow, and to grow continuously. If it could be shown at any moment, that, taking the whole world together, the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is steadily decreasing, it would justify very much more than apprehension for the future of the faith. It would argue something radically wrong with the faith itself. The Christian man dare not admit at any moment that the faith of his Lord Jesus Christ has ceased to move men's minds. It must continue to grow, or it must be seen to be stricken with the first symptoms of its inevitable death.

The story is told of a French philanthropist, that once he invented a new religion. It was a sort of modified and improved Christianity. He fitted for it a ritual and a series of doctrines which he embodied into a creed; but, to his astonishment, his propaganda met with no success. Men listened to what he had

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to say, turned away and laughed, and went on with their frivolities. So he came one day to the ex-bishop Talleyrand, complaining that his new religion could get no hearing; that men were so wedded to their old faiths, their old worship, that they would not listen. The keen old man sympathised with him, and said to him, 'It is true; it is very hard for a new religion to get a hearing. I am at a loss to advise you what to do.' And then, seeming to bethink himself, he said, 'There is one thing which you might try. I would suggest it to you. Get yourself crucified, and rise again the third day!'

We turn our minds to the parable of Lessing. 'Once upon a time a certain king of a great realm built himself a palace, the most gorgeous that ever had been planned, the wonder of the whole earth. A strife arose among certain connoisseurs as to some of the obscure ground-plans upon which the palace was constructed. The conflict lasted through a great many years. While this conflict was going on, it happened upon a time, that a watchman one night cried out, "Fire!" And the architects began running hither and thither, each with his plan, squabbling as to whether the fire had broken out in this place, or whether it had broken out at that place, and as to what was the best spot to apply the engines. And its friends all took to wrangling. Alas, alas! the beautiful palace will be burned. But it stood there; and presently they discovered that it was not on fire at all. Behind it there was an extraordinary display of northern lights, which shone through it with such brilliancy that the palace itself seemed to be full of flame.'

So we say, let knowledge increase, let it run to and fro, let it lighten up the world all it will, it will only illuminate, because it cannot destroy, the city of our God. S. D. McCONNELL.

The Divine Presence in the Fire.

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. DANIEL iii. 25.

I. WE do not ask for great insight to perceive that this story is a picture of the world: man and the fire, that is life. But it does ask some insight, or, at least, if not some insight, some reflection, to perceive the other aspect of its universality. If man and the fire shall be described as life, man and the fire and the Divine Presence walking with man in the fire—that is religion. It is something that we are given the power of perceiving a greater than man with man in the fire. I ask you to look at man in the fire. I take man first as an intellectual being. Pain, which comes to the sons of men, comes with an appeal to their consciousness. The beast

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suffers, but he makes no moan beyond the moment of suffering; but man can anticipate, and he knows that the pain which enters into his life to-day is the indication of something which is working there, and he lives in the constant dread of its recurrence. Ah! from these two things, from memory and anticipation, there comes the agony of retrospect and the agony of suspense.

Take man as a moral being. Here, again, look at the story. These men suffered because of their allegiance to a law higher than the law of self-preservation. 'Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God,' was the language of Apostles. Duty commands us (so men in all ages have spoken); we must do right, though it mean death, because there is a law within which is imperious, paramount, predominating over the law of self-preservation. Why is it that a man who is conscientious must suffer? It is just because he is conscientious. He cannot demoralise himself, and the law within asserts itself and makes him face the greater pain. But this proclaims his greatness. He is the greater, because he is the witness to a law which is larger, truer, deeper than any of the outside laws which touch the physical world.

In another way his sense of right makes him suffer. He cannot perhaps acquiesce in conventional standards: but he must do right though the world frown, because the divine law within him is asserting itself over the law outside. His suffering springs from this—his capacity to understand the allegiance which he owes to the higher law. Here, again, in the very agony which comes to the soul where conscience rules, I see something which resembles the form of the Son of God.

Take man as a spiritual being. Here, again, you find the same law. He cannot yield to man, he realises that his progress must be through pain. He cannot advance except through pain. What is he doing? Bearing witness to the divine law which is within him—to that presence of the Son of God, which is seen most where the fire is fiercest.

II. In every universal thing there is some law. The men at whose side the Son of God walks, who are triumphant over the fierceness of the flame are the men who have had a victory previous to that. Their victory over the fire was preceded by their victory over the multitude. They would not bow down, and, being victorious in their refusal to bow down before the sleek conventionalisms of life, they are the victors when the supreme agony comes. But we must go back further. Who are the men who have been strong against the world, able to stand when the multitude fall? The men who have first been victors over themselves. These men who were victorious over the world, and would not bow before the image of

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gold, were the men who, in the earlier part of their career, had mastered themselves. To those about them they had said, 'The luxuries of this place, its attractions and its seductions, we feel to be dangerous to the law of our manhood, and the law of the divine life within us; give us, therefore, plain fare; feed us not with the king's dainties.' What is this? It is the triumph over self. The man who has been victorious over self is the man who is victorious over the world, and the man who is victorious over the world is victorious over the fire which is in the world. That is the law.

III. We are called upon to suffer in the world, and who will unriddle its pain? The pain is given that the divine may be made manifest. The world upon which the Cross was raised was created the world of suffering. The Cross was to be the symbol of its agony, and the symbol of the Divine Presence also. It is in the fire and in the pain that the Divine Presence is revealed. In this lies the glory of suffering. As we suffer, the presence of God may be seen. We feel that the powers within us are not equal to the conflict of life, not strong enough to battle against the passions within us, not courageous enough to face the temptations of the world, not trained enough to bear the fire, the fierce fire, of life's supremest agony; yet we can only look up with appealing eyes, and with prayerful and trustful hearts, to that Divine Presence whose love is imperishable. But we can do more. We, even we, can manifest Him and His power. If we stand in the evil day, 'and, having done all, still stand,' we shall be able to come forth from the fire unhurt, without having even the smell of fire upon us.

It is well then to recognise, as our Master did, the material laws around us, and to urge upon all reverence for the physical laws by which life is regulated. But we must go higher and say, 'The law by which victory in life is to be achieved is the law of self-control.' And yet higher still we may go, and find the inspiration of our life in the revelation of the Divine Presence, of 'God with us.' Oh, here lies the charm, and here the courage for the soul of man. Tell me that I have to struggle, that I have to win the victory for myself, and I shall be appalled; the thought of my many passions will petrify my efforts and turn my powers into stone; but, when you say God is with me, a sword is put into my trembling hand and the blow dealt is in the name of God. He has nerved my hand, He has covered my head in the day of battle. Is not this love with us still? Do we preach the gospel of an absent God? Here is the law of self-conquest; but here is also the inspiring thought, that you are never left alone, that in its fiercest fires the Divine Presence moves with you. There is courage, there is hope, there is guarantee of victory.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

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The Handwriting on the Wall.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. DANIEL v. 5.

I. **T**HERE are many Belshazzars in the world; even at the present moment. There is, in human nature, an evil rebelling principle against the God who made us; and men are to be found whose wills are in violent opposition to His laws and authority. They have a law in their members, which they are determined to follow; they have idols of their own hearts, idols of gold, silver, iron, wood, and stone, whom they resolve to serve, let the consequences be what they may. Their days are numbered, their career fixed, their punishment entered, in the great book of life and death. The moment of their dissolution is hid from them; but whenever it does come, in their present state, it must lead to a place of torment and anguish unutterable.

II. Men do not sufficiently consider the omniscience of God. They would persuade themselves that there are places where He cannot see them; that there are things which He does not know. To judge by their conduct, they seem to ask, in the words of Job, 'How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.' But, after all, it is weak and wicked man that is deceived, and not God. Among the most perilous delusions of sin, must it be considered by the Christian, that his very heart can be so seared against the convictions of truth, that he can for a moment bring himself, like some of the heathen, to imagine the all-seeing, the ever-present, and all-pervading Godhead, stripped of His very nature, and slumbering, absent, or unobservant in the recesses of wickedness.

III. The third consideration arising from the text is this: How would it be with each of us, if there were a handwriting against the wall to warn us of the end of our career, and the arrival of our day of account; if, in the commission of guilt, in the midst of our unholy pleasures, we should see in letters of fire, the unexpected summons to the judgment-seat of that God, whom we are resolutely defying? Sudden death, under any circumstances, is indeed sufficiently terrible. Even to the good it is very awful; and all of us, with good reason, in our beautiful Litany, pray to be delivered from it. But what must be its horrors to the wicked? to the wilfully wicked; to those upon whom all the patience, and correction, and long-suffering of

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God have been thrown away; to those with whom advice, instruction, reproof, and warnings have been unavailing?

To conclude, then; in addition to the reflections thus arising more immediately from the text, allow me to add one other closely connected with it, and already slightly intimated, which may serve as its application. I have already observed, that the days of special miracle are past. The Almighty has now recourse to the ordinary means of Providence, for the most part, to check the sinner in his career. His covenant of mercy, His revealed will, His goodness and forbearance, the suggestions of His Holy Spirit, the examples of others, and the dictates of our own interest and common sense, are among these means of grace; and he who despises them does it at the peril of his own soul. If a man die in his sins, with such guides, such checks, such monitors, let him not plead ignorance nor incapacity. Of that man, God Himself may justly inquire thus: 'After having granted to all such light, such mercy, such long-suffering, can I "have any pleasure that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live"?' And he is constrained to answer, 'Thy ways, O Lord, are equal. It is not Thy will that one of these little ones should perish. It is man who is the promoter of his own ruin.' Under such a scheme of mercy, then, none must expect a miracle to stay them in their iniquity; to give them the warning of Belshazzar.

A. B. EVANS.

The Charge against Belshazzar.

The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. DANIEL v. 23.

I. GOD'S dealings towards us.
1. He keeps us in being. What a mercy it is to know that the key of the invisible world is in the hands of Jesus, and that we are each immortal till our work on earth is done! The time of our departure is irreversibly fixed. It cannot be hastened. It cannot be deferred. 'Thou knowest not what shall be on the morrow.' We ought to be glad it is so. We should be unfitted for the duties of our daily life. This knowledge was of no use to good Hezekiah. How comforting, too, is the reflection that while we praise God day by day for our creation, we can also praise Him day by day for our preservation; that He, in whose hand our breath is, will supply us with food and raiment, and every other necessary for maintaining the breath of our lives; and that while the young lions may lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good!

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And this is our next thought. God not only keeps us in being, but also—

2. He arranges our affairs. How simply is that expressed by the words, 'whose are all thy ways.' Belshazzar forgot that God had made him king of Babylon. Yes, a man's ways are ordered of the Lord. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. God's eye, too, is ever watching us. 'All things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' 'Doth He not see my ways,' asks Job, 'and count all my steps?' 'Thou compasseth my path,' says the Psalmist, 'and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.' And still more forcibly King Solomon tells us, 'Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?' Like Belshazzar, we too much forget this.

We now come to the other side of our subject.

II. Our duty towards God.

What is our duty towards God? Our duty towards God is to live to His glory. The neglect of this was the sin which the prophet Daniel charged upon Belshazzar: 'God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.' And now, you will ask, How can I glorify God? There are three ways, I conceive, in which this may be done. We glorify God—

1. By our repentance. In nothing can we poor poor sinners so glorify God as by casting ourselves at the foot of the Cross, there bewailing and lamenting our past sins, exclaiming, like those of old, 'We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God.'

But repentance is not enough. We also glorify God—

2. By our faith. Here was the sin of Belshazzar. He had no faith in God his Maker. Instead of glorifying God by his faith, he scorned and mocked the King of Heaven.

Once more. We glorify God not only by our faith and repentance, but also—

3. By our holiness. What was our Lord's own testimony? 'Hereby,' He says, 'is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' Not he that says, 'Lord, Lord,' glorifies God; but he that doeth God's will. But how can we be fruitful? Only in one way. Can a branch bring forth fruit, if it is cut off from the tree? No. It will presently wither and die. So is it with ourselves. 'If a man abide in Me,' says Jesus, 'the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me,' apart from Me, 'ye can do nothing.'

C. CLAYTON.


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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

An Apostolic Demand.

(Home Mission Sermon.)

For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. 2 CORINTHIANS x. 14-16.

I.  HERE was a collection at that time made everywhere for the poor of Jerusalem. It was part of the arrangement made between S. Paul and the other Apostles that wherever he went he should remember the poor; and accordingly we find in his epistles plain traces of what he did. Here at Corinth, where there was a great deal of wealth—it was probably the wealthiest place at that time of all the places in which S. Paul preached, because he had not yet come to Rome. Of all the places at which S. Paul preached up to that date there was none so wealthy as Corinth, and therefore it was necessary to press upon the Corinthians that this duty was specially incumbent upon them. We find the same thing was done, however, in other Churches—certainly done at Philippi and at other churches in Macedonia—and there can be no doubt that S. Paul made these collections wherever he went. This was a temporary thing, and it just lasted for the generation and for no more.

II. But, again, in the second place, from the earliest times we find that it was laid upon the people at large to maintain the Christian ministry. A Church was founded, and, as soon as a considerable body of disciples had been gathered together, it was laid upon them that it was their duty to Christ to see that the ministers who preached among them should be supported entirely by their help; they were to live of the gospel. S. Paul himself, in certain parts of his preaching of the gospel, maintained himself, or very nearly maintained himself; but he did it for a particular purpose, and in the doing of it he does not speak of it as if this were something excellent in him, and as if everybody was to follow his example. Quite the contrary, he speaks of it as a thing that he was permitted to do, not as a thing that everybody would be permitted to do. He was permitted to

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preach without receiving any support from his converts, he was permitted to maintain himself all the time. The rest of the ministers generally were not permitted to do anything of the sort, and we can see the reason: because it was of real importance that the ministers as a rule should give themselves wholly to the ministry, they should give themselves entirely to that work and not be compelled to withdraw their attention in order to obtain their livelihood. That was the second purpose for which money was everywhere required from the people, and that, it is plain, was a permanent purpose. It was not a temporary thing that was to last just for that generation, it was a permanent thing that was always to continue.

III. Then, again, in the third place, from the very beginning the Christians were called upon to contribute to the support of their own poor, of all those who were too aged, or too infirm, to maintain themselves. The Christian Church held it always as an imperative duty, and the Apostles plainly enough inculcated this duty, that there should be sufficient support provided for all those who were unable to work. Widows, for instance, when they were old and unable to work, were supported by the alms of the Church, and S. Paul, in one of his epistles, makes regulations about these widows—who were to claim this support, and who were not. The administration of this kind of charity was begun even in the Church at Jerusalem. There we find that the Apostles themselves had it in their hands at first, this administration of alms for the poor; but they were so taken up, as they ought to have been taken up, with their own proper duties as ministers of the gospel, that there was a great deal of discontent, and it was in consequence of this that the seven deacons were appointed in order that the administration of these alms should be in their hands, and that the Apostles should be free to do their own proper work, namely, to evangelise the world. This, then, is the third purpose, the maintenance of the poor. It must be remembered that this maintenance of the poor was very carefully attended to, and the Apostle is exceedingly stern in the rule he makes about it, because he lays down that ‘if any man will not work, neither let him eat.’ There was to be no alms-giving to them who could work and would not. But all alike were called upon to contribute to such a purpose.

IV. But there is a fourth purpose, and it is this fourth purpose which is spoken of here in the passage which I have read to you out of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, because here he speaks of support being given in what may be called the perpetual missionary work of the Church, that is, he was not content to remain at Corinth, it was not right he should. He was to go and preach to the Gentiles beyond Corinth—he did, in fact, go on to Illyricum—and plainly calls upon the Corinthian Church to provide the means of doing so.

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The rule of the gospel was that the ministers of the gospel should be maintained by those who had been converted to the gospel; but it is obvious enough that, until there was a Church gathered together, this could not be done. As long as the Church was very small in any particular place, the numbers very few, the provision would have been insufficient, and so accordingly S. Paul calls upon the Corinthian Church to give him the means of going on beyond them. He did not want it for himself—he could maintain himself, he proved it—but he did want it for others, for those who went with him to do this work. They were to preach the gospel as well as he, and they must be maintained, and the Lord had not given them permission to maintain themselves; very likely it would not have been possible for them to do both things as it was for S. Paul. They had no such permission. Who was to maintain them? The places to which they were sent could not maintain them—they were not yet converted, and for some time the converts would be too few to enable them to discharge this duty. The places to which they were sent could not do it, and it is plain that the places from which they were sent must do it, and the burden was consequently laid upon all Christians to contribute in this way to the work of the gospel in regions in their own neighbourhood where the provisions for the ministry was insufficient. This fourth purpose, you will observe, is really the form in which the first purpose is kept up. The first purpose of which I spoke was to maintain the poor at Jerusalem. But why was it necessary to maintain them? Because they had given all their substance in order to supply the means of preaching the gospel in the regions around them and beyond them, and consequently other churches were required to restore to them what they had thus bestowed. But other churches were not required to do what the Church at Jerusalem had done, namely, to throw all their property into one common stock for that purpose. What was it that was required of them? What was required of other churches was to contribute towards the missionary work.

Here, then, you have the four purposes for which men were then called upon to contribute, and three of them, it will be seen, are permanent purposes; and we have the sanction of God's Word, and Apostolic practice, for asking for your alms towards those three purposes. We have a right to ask the people of Christ to support the Christian ministry among themselves. If it be not adequately supported already it is their duty to make up what is wanted. In the next place we have a right to call upon Christians to assist in relieving the privations of the poor. There are those who are poor from misfortune, from illness, from accident, for old age, or the like. We call upon Christians to help us, we appeal to them for alms to be given at offertories for this purpose. This was required in the days

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of the Apostles, and it is equally required now. To a certain extent of course the State provides for these—the State, because it took up the Christian principle; but the State, from the nature of the case, cannot do much, cannot do all, there must be something left still for Christians to do, and, of course, the ministers of the gospel are required, as occasion serves, to put this demand before the people.

ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

No Prayer in Hell. In the family of one who is now a peer of the realm, the most sovereign contempt was manifested by a valet of the

EPH. vi. 18. house to family worship. Not satisfied with constantly absenting himself upon those occasions when prayer was observed in the house, he proceeded to show a yet more decided hatred to the service, and made a point to insult the whole family while at their devotions. For this purpose he contrived to place himself in the adjoining room to the one in which they had assembled; and by noise in whistling, singing, or throwing about the furniture, as his corrupt humour directed him, to turn, if he could, the whole solemnity into ridicule. It was impossible with impunity to pass over unnoticed an insolence so unpardonable. But without being supposed to know that this conduct of his was designed, his master took occasion to inquire of him how it was that he never attended family prayer. ‘Prayer!’ said he (and with the most impudent brow of scorn and derision), ‘I never did live in a praying family, and I never will.’ ‘True, my friend,’ replied his master, when he heard it, ‘you have for once spoken the truth. You never have known, it is plain, by what you have said, what prayer is, and the blessedness of it; and living and dying in this prayerless state, you never will. For in hell there are no prayers, and to that family you are hastening, and ere long will live in it for ever.’

Bold Preaching. ON one occasion the Rev. Frederick Robertson had been asked to preach at a church where the congregation was chiefly composed of those whom Pope describes as passing from ‘a youth of frolics,’ to ‘an old age of cards.’ His text was, ‘Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ The sermon was most impressive and eloquent, and bold in its denunciation. Returning home, he asked a gentleman if he thought he was right in

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preaching it. The gentleman replied, 'It was very truthful, but, considering the character of the clergyman whose pulpit you occupied by courtesy, and the character of the congregation, not a discreet sermon. It might have been as truthful without apparently setting both minister and people at defiance.' 'You are quite right,' he answered; 'but the truth was this; I took two sermons with me into the pulpit, uncertain which to preach; but just as I had fixed upon the other, something seemed to say to me, "Robertson, you are a craven, you dare not speak here what you believe"; and I immediately pulled out the sermon that you heard, and preached it as you heard it.'

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity.


Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	PHILIPPIANS I. 3-11.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW XVIII. 21-35.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	DANIEL VI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	DANIEL VII. VER 9 OR DANIEL XII.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Love and Knowledge.

This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge. PHIL. i. 9.

I. ERE we see first what S. Paul takes for granted as the underlying substance, as the raw material, of divine life of the soul of man. 'This I pray, that your love may abound.' It is not this: 'I pray that your knowledge may abound yet more and more in love,' but, 'that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge.' And this order of the ideas, need I say, is by no means a rhetorical accident. Whenever in S. Paul's writings knowledge and love are put in competition with each other the precedence is assigned to love. For, as compared with knowledge, love is intrinsically a stronger thing, and it is worth more practically. To be knit to God by love is better, religiously speaking, than to speculate about Him, however rightly, as an abstract Being. To enwrap other men, perhaps multitudes, in the flame of a passionate

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enthusiasm for private or for public virtue, is better than to analyse in the solitude of a study rival systems of ethical, or social, or political truth. Each has its place, but love comes first. And if S. Paul said this, we may dare to say it was because the divine inspiration which swayed him overruled the natural bent of his mind, and forced him to recognise the primacy of love. For S. Paul, with all his passions, was, before everything else, a dialectician by nature. He bends here, as ever, to the intrinsic force of things—I would rather say to the genius of the gospel. Though he should ‘speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and had not charity,’ he was, he says, ‘but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.’ Knowledge, he knows, ‘puffeth up; charity edifieth.’ After that, in the wondrous providence of God the world through its philosophy knew not God, it pleased God, he says, through the foolishness of preaching—and the substance of that Charity was the Infinite Charity Himself—to save them that believe. The philosophy of the world, he tells the Corinthians, is folly with God. Charity, he maintains, is even greater than the great graces of faith and hope: how infinitely must it transcend—it is an *à fortiori* argument—mere knowledge! It may, indeed, be objected that if love is to exist at all, it must have an object, and that the loving soul must have some knowledge of this object. And reference may here be made to S. Peter’s precept, that Christians should give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity: where charity is clearly represented not as the foundation, but as the crowning of the spiritual edifice.

II. And, secondly, love is called forth by one specific kind of moral beauty—by generosity. The generosity of Jesus our Lord in giving Himself to become Incarnate, and to die for us poor sinners, appeals to the human heart even more powerfully than the faultless beauty of His character. The story of the Passion has melted heathen savages ere now to tears. The philosophy of self-sacrifice is always intelligible. ‘Scarcely for a righteous man,’ observes S. Paul, human life being what it is—‘will one die; yet, perchance, for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.’ He loved me, and gave Himself for me: this is a reflection which bids love spring up in the Christian heart; and thus ‘the love of Christ,’ generation after generation, ‘constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead, and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again.’

III. But, further, love is a distinct endowment. It is not certainly,

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it is not inevitably created by the great motives referred to acting upon our natural sense of fitness or beauty, or upon our natural conscience. There is much without us, there is much within us, God knows, ready to nip in the bud any fair flower, ready to stifle any pure and lofty impulse of the soul. The provocation from without must be reinforced, corresponded to by some heaven-sent influence within. And love accordingly, we are told, is an infused grace. 'The love of God,' says the Apostle, 'is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' What else might have been a passing gust of feeling, human, perhaps, down to the very verge of sin, is at once transfigured, strengthened, steadied, made permanent, by the breath of the Most Holy; it becomes henceforth a constant and powerful influence, penetrating, swaying, ruling the life. Yes, let us be sure, the fundamental thing in the regenerate soul is the love of Jesus Christ, God and Man. To love Jesus is to love the awful, the illimitable, the inaccessible God, so presented as to be within the compass of our finite capacities, condescending to us in a form in which He and His ineffable perfections have become, if I may dare to say it, concrete and intelligible. To love Jesus is to love man—man set before our eyes in such sort as worthily to claim our ungrudging love—man relieved from the dreadful entail of his own accumulating burden of corruption—man restored for once to a perfect correspondence, which is evident at a glance, with the primal sketch, with the complete idea, with the archetype of his being. And thus the love of Jesus is the common source of all that is on the one hand most truly spiritual religion, and of all that is on the other most fruitful and most creative in philanthropy. It is with S. Peter as with S. Paul, it is now as in the first age, it will be to the end of time as now, the fundamental thing is the religious life.

IV. But S. Paul would have this love abound in knowledge. The knowledge which S. Paul is thinking of is doubtless primarily religious knowledge. The higher knowledge—*πρόγνωσις* is the word, not mere *γνώσις*—is what he prays for as the outgrowth of learning. There is a period in the growth of love when such knowledge is imperatively required. In its earliest stages the loving soul lives only in the light and warmth of its object; it sees him, as it were, in a blaze of glory; it rejoices to be before him, to be beneath him, to be close to him; it asks no questions, it has no heart for scrutiny, it only loves; it loves and worships, it worships and loves again; it passes its moments, it exhausts its energies in a well-nigh uninterrupted, unsuspended ecstasy. But from the nature of the case this period comes to an end, not because love grows cold, but because it becomes exacting. Love cannot live for ever in a cell apart from thought, from society—apart from the many influences which may

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too easily, if neglected, act upon it as a destructive solvent. No man, it has been said, can permanently keep his philosophy in one department of his mind and his devotion in another. And this being so, love has sooner or later to come to a sort of understanding with thought, both public and private thought, in order to live. Love must, from the necessity of the case, know something accurately about its object. What is he? Whence is he? What can be known of his ways, of his works, of his will? It is easy enough to say that love ought not to ask questions: sooner or later it will ask them; and if these questions are not wisely or truly answered—if, instead of knowledge, nothing better than guessings, surmises, or, worse, myths and fables, are forthcoming, then love in its deep disappointment will sicken and die; it will recoil with a sense of weary languor from the object on which its gaze has been so intensely fixed; it will feel that He cannot really satisfy its own enthusiasm about Him unless He, the same yesterday and for ever, if He be, shall stand out before it in distincter outline—unless it, love itself, shall grow more and more in such knowledge as it may.

H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

Divine Upholding.

Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. PHILIPPIANS i. 6.

I. VERY one who has begun in earnest to serve and please God must have the question at times presented to him, 'Shall I persevere unto the end?' He knows that God has upheld him, but he is tormented with the question, will God hold him up notwithstanding his own constant falling away? He is tempted, perhaps, to magnify unduly these fallings away, but he is not the less disturbed at the thought of them.

II. Now this passage gives to a sincere believer, all the consolation and good hope possible, if he continues to lay hold of God, but he must do that. The good work which God has begun and will continue is his sanctification. If he desires, and prays, and takes pains that this may continue, then he can most assuredly realise the blessedness of the Apostolic promise; but if he does not, if he quits his hold upon God, then all is doubt, all is uncertainty.

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What he has to do is to lay hold on God again, to return to Him with deep contrition, to pray God with all the earnestness that his soul is capable of, that he may recover lost ground, that God would renew in him whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by his own carnal will and frailty.

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Self-abnegation.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. S. MATTHEW xviii. 28.



VER against this parable of Christ's, stand in the epistle to the Romans some brief but pointed words of S. Paul's. They are these: 'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom. . . . Owe no man any thing, but to love one another'

Are these two passages contradictory, or irreconcilable? At the first glance they seem so. For at the first glance it is evident that an inspired Apostle does not regard debt, whether it be national or individual debt, as a national or individual blessing, differing thus from some moderns who are quite clear as to the blessing of both. On the contrary, he forbids debt in language as authoritative as it is explicit. 'Owe no man any thing' is a proposition of the most definite meaning stated in the most transparent language. On the other hand, here is this parable of Christ's, not so precise, nor so mandatory, but equally clear in its drift, and equally positive in its emphasis.

The emphasis of what Christ has to say is to be found in its message not to the debtor, but to the creditor. If you are a debtor, it is the emphasis of the New Testament everywhere that you are to pay your debt. 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' is Christ's form of that precept which the Apostle utters when he enjoins, 'owe no man any thing.' Debt is misery, bondage, the loss of independence, and with it, alas! too often the loss of a fine conscience, of manhood, of a lofty sense of equity and rectitude and justice. But there are times when a man is a debtor through no fault of his own; there are times, in a word, when every reasonable expectation is dis-

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appointed, and when one finds himself powerless to discharge obligations simply because he finds himself bound up in that great net-work of human obligations which go to make up trade, society, nay, human life, itself, and in which he is an unwilling debtor to another, simply because some others are even more unwilling debtors to him.

I. Now at this point it is that there enters the significance of that parable from which I have taken the text. Amidst the ordinary commerce of life there are constantly arising occasions when other men and women fail in their obligations to us. Somehow or other they are our debtors. They have come under distinct obligations to us, and those obligations, for one and another reason, they fail to pay. How now are we to treat such persons? Two lines of conduct lie open before us which are plainly enough indicated in the language of the parable. One of them is that described in the text. Are you a creditor? Very well, then. Take your debtor by the throat (the law allows you to do so), and crowd him hard up against the statute until you have expressed out of him the last jot and tittle that is due to you. That is one course, and if you follow it, no man can say that you have not acted within the limits of absolute legality. It is not a very elevated or engaging rule of life, but that fact, to many minds, is more than counterbalanced by the consideration that it is the rule of life which governs the vast majority of human beings. In a word, disguise it as we may, the first impulse of humanity is to take its fellow-man by the throat crying, 'Pay me that thou owest!'

Surely, it may be said, there is a time in our dealings with others when we may fully insist upon our dues, and when to forego such insistence is simply to encourage unscrupulous aggression and dishonesty. Surely, there are some insolent offenders against one's rights whose offences are so rank and grave that simple justice to others, if not to one's-self, demands their rebuke. Undoubtedly, and it is the glory of human society, that society itself sooner or later lays its hand upon such offenders and deals with them more justly and summarily than any one individual can possibly do. There comes a time when Shylock's cruel exaction against Antonio becomes the quarrel of all Venice, and when all classes of society and all the powers of the state unite in making the grasping Israelite a warning for all time. But ordinarily the issues that divide us from our fellows are far more trivial than this. When we are most noisily insisting upon our dues, has it ever occurred to us to pause and think how small was the debt which was owing to us? Oh, could we gather together the claims against our fellow men and women which we have accounted just claims, and concerning which our hearts have burned with resentment and our cheeks flushed with anger—the petty miserable quarrels and heart-burnings about questions of precedence,

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about some unintentional slight, about the ten thousand minor collisions which jar and irk us in life—what a contemptible catalogue it would be! And we who have done so as often as not, profess and call ourselves the disciples of a crucified Christ! Shame on us that we have so poorly learned the lesson of His gospel or the meaning of His Cross.

II. For when we come to look at either of these, what is so sublimely significant as the utter absence in them of any clamouring for dues—any insistence on the part of the Saviour of the race of what men owed to Him? It would be worth our while to sit down and read the Gospels through, to see if we can find anywhere an instance in which Christ ever reminded men of what they owed to Him. There is one indeed, in which at the first glance there seems to be something like the assertion of such a claim, but the moment that we look at it a little closer we see in it only a new and more wonderful illustration of that self-abnegation which is at once the distinction of Christ and the glory of His religion. It is when Simon the Pharisee, having bidden Jesus to his table, is shocked at His familiarity with an erring woman who has literally crawled up to and crouched at His feet and is covering them with her embraces. It is in justification of her that Christ replies to the offended conventionalist, 'Thou gavest Me no water to wash My feet, but this woman hath washed them with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but since I came in she hath not ceased to kiss My feet.' But we miss the significance of Christ's language here, entirely, if we merely imagine Him to be rebuking Simon's neglect of what was due to Him by means of a courteous innuendo. On the contrary, He mentions Himself only to excuse the Magdalene, and it is plain from the beginning to the end of the scene that He is not thinking of what another had owed Him, but rather of what her supreme devotion, which so outran all measurement of mere custom or due, had freely given to Himself.

There are men and women the world over who in the home, and the family, in their pleasures as in their duties, amid the thousand strifes and rivalries that enter into life, have not insisted upon their dues; but, remembering how one to whom they owe so much, has been most patient and tender with them, have striven to translate that same patience which they have learned of Him into forgiveness and forbearance towards others. They may not get the most money, or the best places, or the most obsequious salutations. But these are the men and women whom humanity will carry on its lips and in its heart.

H. C. POTTER.

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Forgiveness.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. S. MATTHEW xviii. 35.

I. **T**HE teaching of this parable is exceedingly plain, and, we should think, unmistakable. It is this, that want of charity casts a man out of grace, even the grace of forgiveness: so that the burden of his former sins is again laid upon him.

This parable teaches us, what a great number of other places do, such particularly as S. Matthew vi. 15, that our continuing in a state of forgiveness entirely depends upon our continuing in a state of charity.


II. Some speak of the uncharitable servant as not being really forgiven, for, they say, if he had really been forgiven, he would have extended forgiveness to his fellow-servant; but we seem to be taught exactly the contrary. 'I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.' If the king of the parable represents God, it is impossible to imagine that anything which He says is not real and to be taken in its literal meaning. And surely there is enough amongst religious people to teach us that a man who is certain that God has forgiven him may be uncharitable, bitter, and even malicious.

M. F. SADLER.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Private Prayer.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house: and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. DANIEL vi. 10.

I.  **H**ARDLY think that any one, after reading this text, can set up the plea that he has not leisure for prayer three times a day. If Daniel had, who has not? If that man of wonderful business always upon his shoulders and his mind, could find the leisure to go to his room three times a day to pray, where is there a man upon this earth who cannot? But if it happen that any man, being separate from his chamber, at a distance, cannot go within the closed door, let that man endeavour to set apart a certain

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portion of the day—a certain hour, or half hour, or ten minutes—as they come round regularly; and make a little sanctuary for himself in his own closed thoughts, for his mid-day communion with his God. So that, if he cannot command the quietness and secrecy of the closet, he may command sanctuary feelings though not in the common sanctuary place. And you remember that our blessed Lord's closet was the mountain-top. Therefore, though a man be out in the fields, though he may be in his office, or ordinary routine vocation, yet that man can have his regular hours when he can have the presence of his God in prayer.

Now, remember that all distinct acts of prayer are chiefly valuable as promoting the general habit of prayerfulness in the mind. There is a danger when we speak of the importance of prayer so many times a day, of persons running away with the thought that that is enough; that that is all the prayer required. But to very little profit will be prayer three times a day in the closet, if it does not minister to an habitual uplifting of the heart in dependence and praise all the day long. Had you lived with S. Paul and Daniel, I do not suppose you would have found those men's prayers only in separate, certain, defined hours, but in a constant praying mind; and that is implied in the Apostle's words, 'Instant in prayer.' But as the body cannot be in health without regular meal-times, so the soul could not be in health unless it had separate, regular times for communion with God. Therefore, the general prayerful habit always indicates the necessity of regularity and precision in the particular times, places, and manner of prayer.

II. Perhaps it would be almost impossible for one man to guide another as to how he should arrange his morning, his mid-day, and his evening supplications. Many persons have found it a salutary and happy way to devote their mid-day supplications very much to intercessory prayer. The evening will always necessarily take the most penitential prayer. The morning, perhaps, as rightly, will be the more joyous. In the morning we cast ourselves in our confidences upon God; we make dedication of ourselves to God; we implore the influence we need for the coming duties. In the evening we look back upon the past, thank Him for mercies, humble ourselves before Him for sins.

Live very much in your prayers from morning to evening, and from evening to morning. Prayer need not go much further back. You need not take retrospects of sins in years gone by, but of sins since last you asked forgiveness only. 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' You need not look forward to to-morrow's difficulties; 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' Deal with that in your next express act of communion with God.

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But remember that all your greatness depends on your nearness to God. Always look to that first; for, as with Daniel, so with you, the success of all the outer life will depend upon that which is going on behind the scenes. A man depends upon that which is going on alone between him and his God. You sometimes speak of a man for his beauty of character, forgetting all his wrestling with God. There is the man. Oh, every man is really what he is in eternity, by what he is when he is alone with God.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Eternal Life.

This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. S. JOHN xvii. 3.

I.  HE belief in eternal life is one of the most persistent, the most diffused, and closely cherished, of all our beliefs. It assumes every variety of form, and traverses every scale of the intellectual ladder from the lowest to the highest. To the educated and spiritually-minded it is a belief in the survival under unknown conditions of a soul in union with God. To the earthly it is of the earth earthy, a belief in the mere prolongation of our present life, richer in sensuous joys, freed from the carking care of labour, an indefinite period of tranquil rest and enjoyment. The general diffusion of the belief is a clear matter of experience. So much is this the case that it may be questioned whether any one really thinks of himself as dead. We often, as age creeps on us, are led to contemplate our own decease, we picture its effects on those who are interested in us, in the events which accompany or follow it. But even while thus engaged as we think in recognising to the full the transitory condition of our lives, we catch ourselves involuntarily taking our own place in the events we picture; we still regard ourselves as interested in the effects our death has caused, in the feelings it has aroused, and often check ourselves with a grim smile at the absurdity of what we are doing, an absurdity brought home to us by the sad experience of universal decay, but which somehow or other we cannot as a matter of fact realise.

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If the belief in some form of eternal life is general, the desire for it is even more universal. We have but to look at the wonderful effect of the great doctrine of the resurrection to be sure of this. It was this which formed the great instrument in the hands of the earliest Christian teachers. To a people and to an age full of oppression, injustice, and violence, it spoke in words of irresistible power. No authority, no preconceived idea, no time-honoured religious sanction, could withstand the triumphant growth of the hope that a time was before long coming for the restitution of liberty and justice. And from that time onwards millions of distressed souls for whom the world has seemed a strange anarchy, where wrong triumphed, and sorrow and suffering was an universal law, have found their comfort in the hope that the cure was to be in the future life, 'where the wicked would cease from troubling and the weary be at rest.' For centuries, throughout the western world at least, the general morality of the great bulk of the people has rested almost exclusively on the hopes and fears which were centred on that eternal life; and, in the vista of rewards and punishments which it opened, religious teachers have found and still find the strongest ground on which to rest their arguments.

In the presence of this universal desire and this universal belief, it is well to see what the reported words of our Lord say upon the subject. The fullest and most pregnant utterance is perhaps that which I have chosen for my text: 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send—Jesus Christ.' The knowledge of God is eternal life.

If this be so, the vaunt of theology, that it is the science of sciences, seems no vain one. It must embrace within itself all other forms of knowledge, for its object is the highest; and, brought to its perfection, it is itself eternal life.

II. Beyond the learning of books and of the experience of everyday life, there lies that learning which is won by experience of another sort, by living the life of God. When once we will to do the will of God, and put our will into action, further knowledge comes. It is then that we begin to reach its highest forms. It is not indeed the fulness of God we are to know. Such things pass our knowledge; such perfection we must leave aside; but we may at least know the truth of the doctrine of Jesus. God has not only declared Himself in His working in the universe, not only in the growth and development of the human mind and the human race; He has expressed Himself more clearly still in the voice and life of His Word, Jesus Christ. And it is in living a life in accordance with the will of God, made clear to us first in the universe and then in that holy life, that we have forced upon us, by a personal experi-

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ence, which we cannot contradict, the truth of the great doctrine which Christ taught; and in that doctrine we find the step we were wanting. We seem to come to eternal life itself.

The essence of the good news which Christ brought was the union of God and man. The great gift which, as He declared, He left behind Him was the constant presence within ourselves of God's Spirit. And what is this union but eternal life?

It is not good to call back to life old controversies or to puzzle over the differences of such words as eternal and everlasting. It leads to no good results to consider what may be the character of that changed body with which S. Paul tells us we shall be clothed, or the conditions of that everlasting life of which all we can say is that we have Christ's own word that sublunary relations shall pass away, that there shall be neither marriage nor giving in marriage. Enough for us that, however it may be clothed, the eternal part of us is our spirit, that the eternal life we believe in and long for is the life of that spirit in the immediate presence of God, and that our eternity depends upon the eternity of God. And this is no mere barren phrase or fruitless speculation. It is full of comfort and of hope. As we see the decay of all things around us, the apparent waste of life and energy, the profound insignificance in the great scheme of the world of each individual life, we may be seized with shuddering fear lest the life which seems so far off should be no reality. From such despair and dread this knowledge saves us, for the life of the spirit and the life of God know neither beginning nor end, nor any lapse of time. It leads directly to the sanctification of every act of life, to pure and consistent conduct, to the possession of the power of triumphing in the moral struggle in which we are all engaged.

Knowledge, forced on us in a thousand ways, by learning, by observation, by experience, and hallowed by the object for which it is pursued, opens to us the will of God. A knowledge of the will of God we might hope as reasonable beings would lead us to live in accordance with that will. To thwart it would seem an act of strange perversity, yet we can and do, even though knowledge is there, often act in opposition to it. But there is a further knowledge which comes from living the life of God, which teaches us that we can make that will and our will one and the same, which fills us with certainty of our union with God. And in the splendid certainty that we are His children and one with Him, we may find the power which no antagonistic force can resist, and which even now and here opens for us the gates of eternal life.

J. F. BRIGHT.

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Faith and a Good Conscience.

Holding faith, and a good conscience ; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. 1 TIMOTHY i. 19.

I. **W**HAT is this faith that the blessed Apostle desires Timothy to hold? You observe that he unites it here as well as in other passages in this pastoral epistle with the conscience. First, let me say that I do not believe that the faith here spoken of signifies that depositum of doctrine which God, in His mercy, has been pleased to commit to the custody of the sacred treasury, the Church, which is His Body; or the totality of all the dogmas which constitute the law of our life, when we apprehend them by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that in the long-run constitute the moral grandeur of every nation in which the gospel of Christ is preached, and which constitute, moreover, the foundation of national greatness and national stability. I don't believe for one moment that these are represented by the faith of which the Apostle here speaks. Neither do I think that the Apostle here means the bare assent of the understanding to historical fact; and the reason I do not think that the Apostle here means by faith the bare assertion of the understanding to historical fact is this, that I have yet to learn the connection there is between the information of the understanding and the quickening of the conscience. I believe, on the contrary, that every department of literature can be cited to establish the doctrine that a man may believe very rightly and act very wrongly. Do we not see this in ordinary life? How many there are of us whose painful experience it is to observe the friends of our youth wrecked upon the troubled sea of sin. Have they surrendered their intellectual belief in certain dogmas which they held in common with us in days gone by? Do we not see one of the great sins that is overmastering the manhood of England at the present time, I mean intemperance? And you will see men who know perfectly well the influence of strong drink upon the blood, the fibre, the muscle, and upon the brain; but the knowledge of this disastrous and destructive influence does not make them sober. I might proceed in this line to cite from all branches of literature to show you how powerless information is to touch the conscience; how powerless knowledge is to quicken that inner life, which can be only quickened by the supernatural touch of the Holy Ghost. And because we see this I will ask you to believe that the word faith here does not mean the mere assent of the intelligence to divine dogma. Nor does the faith spoken of here mean the object of

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faith, I mean God ; God who expressed Himself once for all in Jesus Christ. I cannot believe that faith means this ; for this reason, that the text does not say so. I rather think it implies that disposition of the spirit engendered by the Holy Ghost, upon the basis of the knowledge we receive upon the divine things, leading man to acknowledge his dependence upon God ; that confidence in God, through Christ, which unites the soul on earth to God in heaven ; which enables us to realise the invisible ; which brings eternity itself within the range of our anxieties and within the range of our prospects. This simple trust, this confidence in God, this affiancing of the soul in God, is the faith which S. Paul here implores Timothy to keep on board his ship in the voyage. And will you not agree with me when I ask you to remember the important place that this occupies in our Lord's teaching, as well as in the practical application of His teaching to every day life ? See how the supernatural energies of the Son of God went out upon the objects that crowded upon His beneficent path as He walked from Judea in the south to Samaria in the centre, and from the centre to the north. See how, without almost a single exception, He rewards faith, how He commends its presence, and censures its absence from those who ought to have possessed it. Men taunt us, and say, ' You preachers are always glorifying faith ; why, it would almost appear as though there were no other Christian virtue to be exalted ! ' And yet when you turn to ordinary life, you cannot hesitate to admit that faith, trust, occupies as prominent a position in common life as it occupies in religion. There is not a trader in the country, there is not a merchant in any exchange in Europe, there is not a man in business, a physician, or a lawyer, but must be content to say with the Christian, ' We walk by faith and not by sight. ' God has made the same principle prevalent in common life as in religious life. Does it not occupy an important place in personal religion ? What are the Sacraments of the Church apart from the living faith ? The Church requires repentance and faith of those who come to be baptized ; her voice to her penitents as they approach the table of the Lord is, ' Draw near in faith. ' The admonition of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever he may have been, declares that a man may preach, but it will be of no profit if it be not in faith. As you go on in life, as you grapple for your very soul's existence, progress, purity, and power with temptations which, if not overcome, will overcome you, you will learn before very long that you will not master sin apart from faith in God through Christ. And so we see what this faith is. Moreover, this faith is a purifying principle. Necessarily so, because it unites the soul on earth to the centre of purity. This faith is an exalting principle, because it elevates a man by giving him the nature of Him in whom he reposes, and since it is

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a purifying and exalted principle, and since it thus unites man to God, it follows, almost in the way of natural consequence, that the conscience of the man becomes quickened, becomes invigorated, since in religion he sees, under the influence of the power of God, that he has simple faith in his Lord; and he regards matters in a totally different light, until his whole soul becomes the shrine of the Spirit of God. And thus the conscience which shared our ruin, our physical and intellectual fall, shares the blessings of spiritual life through the power of God the Holy Ghost. The result is that the conscience that was once dormant becomes awake; the conscience that was once inclined to err becomes corrected, and man becomes extremely sensitive to duty; he lives in a totally different atmosphere because he is under the influence of the sovereign Lord of life, whose own shrine the conscience of man becomes.

II. And now you have followed me thus far, you will see that this good conscience will be exercised in two departments; first in the adoration of God, secondly in the service of man. In the adoration of God, in meditation upon God's most blessed Word, in finding in that Word your strength in weakness, your guide in perplexity, your highest ethical ideal, and the guardian of the loftiest sphere of morals, in addition to which you will exercise this good conscience in supplication and in prayer; you will adore God and thank Him for what He has given, and praise Him for what He is. And then turning to the practical side of life, as it is under the influence of a good conscience, you will see what service you can render to those who are about you.

Now observe this statement of the Apostle. 'Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.' This appears to be a rather overcharged statement. I could quite understand the blessed Apostle saying that if a man had not obeyed the directions of his conscience with regard to the service of God and the service of men; I could quite understand that if a man neglected the study of God's blessed Word, that when some sorrow came to him his mind would begin to work, his sorrow would be poignant, and he might say that this affliction was sent to him to remind him of this neglect. And it might be so. But what I want to impress upon you is, that sad as such a soul may be when he confesses that the memory of sin is grievous, and the burden is intolerable; in addition to this the Apostle states that he who neglects the directions of conscience is making shipwreck of the whole faith. In other words, that neglected Christian duty seems to imperil the belief in Christian doctrine; that if you are disobedient to the voice of God within in your conscience, you will not only have the pain and the sorrow of that particular disobedience, but in addition to this a weakness of will, and slowness of resolve, and the various evils that follow

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upon disobedience. In addition to and beyond all, you render the ship of your soul likely to be wrecked upon the rocks that are ahead of you, or if not wrecked upon the rocks you will founder in the storm. This, certainly, is a very solemn thought. There is an old German picture of which I have read. It represents a young man fresh in all the freshness of youth, and yet his face is saddened. He is playing a game of chess with the great enemy of souls. There is a malicious grin upon the face of the infernal fiend; he has won game after game, and man after man, and there is behind the young man, drawn upon the picture, the image of his guardian angel, and he looks on sadness upon the certain end that is before the youth who is thus being beaten in the game of chess by his enemy and ours. That is a picture! How do I know, now, whether that picture is not being worked out in stern reality amongst some of those here to-day? For the men upon the chess-board may represent duty to God and duty to man. It may be that Holy Communion is abandoned, prayer is forgotten, the Word is ignored; at length the whole life is gone, and with life gone, love is gone; and both are gone through the good conscience being thrown overboard. If you would avoid this, then hold faith and a good conscience; do no violence to it or disobey it. See the sea of moral life around you strewn with moral wreckage; and if the sight of this does not restrain you, then, at least, remember that with each act of disobedience the devil's hand is upon the chess-board.

DEAN LEFROY.

A Great Alternative.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. HEBREWS x. 39.

I. TWO characters are here, two minds and the two lives which they shape and rule. One of these is indicated by the peculiar phrase drawing in. The captain of the vessel reads the prognostics of the coming gale, and he draws in, he shortens, or even furls his sail. This is made the picture of a possibly alternative character. These Hebrews were Christians, and indeed they were Christians of a very marked experience, and of a very bright past. They had tasted, the epistle itself says, the goodness of the Word of God, and even the powers of a world to come. They had borne persecution for the Word's sake. Many theologians would have guaranteed them for a consistent course and a safe arrival. The inspired writer does not so. He contemplates the possibility, after all this, of a fatal and final fall from grace. Short of this, he sets before them the danger of what he calls a drawing in, a reserve, a caution, a timid

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prudence in their religion, which may even have the same end as an open drawing back.

II. The drawing in of which we speak, though its motives may vary, has many common characteristics. Of course, it withholds altogether from the stock of Christian evidences in the world its own quota of faith and practice. This is not nothing, for it is by the separate contributions of believing and faithful people that the aggregate of gospel wealth is made up. Ask individual men and women why they are Christians: for one who speaks of books or sermons, fifty, a hundred will adduce the influence of Christian example and Christian persuasion as having been the motive power over themselves. To draw in is to impoverish the treasury, to subtract so many of these influences from that sum-total of that power which is acting upon mankind in Christ's behalf. Nor is it only upon others that this reserve tells. The text speaks of it as having a terrible effect upon the man himself: it speaks of drawing in unto perdition. That last state, over which Scripture draws at once an awful and a merciful veil, is here connected significantly with a life of reserve in reference to Christ Himself. Not in vain, we may be quite sure, did He speak on earth of that confessing or denying Him before men which is to bring with it His confession or His denial of the man himself before His Father and the holy angels. Oh! it is bad for the man himself to have lived this life of religious reserve. If it were but the suppression of truth, we know that it might be near akin to falsehood. There is a hypocrisy of dissembling, never let us forget it, quite as real as the more vulgar yet also less common hypocrisy of pretence. It is an untruthful thing to pass for that which you are not, even if it makes you out worse than you are. There is no virtue in the false witness which is against yourself; the effect is falsehood, be the motive for it what it may. Let us learn from the subject which is engaging us the responsibility to one another, the responsibility to ourselves, the responsibility to the cause of truth and good in the world, of being plain and straightforward as Christian people. The Epistle connects it with the ordinance of worship. 'Forsake not,' it says, 'the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.' Worship ought to be, how seldom it is, the confession of Christ. We ought to be glad of the opportunity of confessing in this world-church and church-world of the present; we have none too many of such opportunities. We ought to endeavour to make worship confession—confession of Christ, I mean—by earnestness, by devotion, by intense absorption in the thing we come to do. We are here to throw away reserve, to break the bad silence, to profess the faith, to make this the description of each gathering together, 'I believe, and therefore have I spoken;' most of all in that service which is the very

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commemoration of the crucified Lord, the very claiming of the benefits of His Passion, the very showing forth of His death till He come. Here is that unreserve which is all of good, and has no alloy of evil in it, here, and in one other thing which the context allies with it; 'Exhorting one another.' Let us read this word also more exactly: 'encouraging one another.' Yes, it is that thought of which the gospel is so full, that thought, hopeful and helpful; not preaching, not scolding, not threatening, but saying in word and tone, 'Listen for and listen to the crying voice behind thee, each one: This is the way; walk thou in it. Come with us in sweet Christian companionship; come ye and let us walk together in the light of the Lord.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Forgiveness a Victory. A MORE glorious victory cannot be gained over another man than this, that when the injury began on his part S. MATT. xviii. 21. the kindness should begin on ours.

Fulness of Grace. S. AUSTIN, wondering at the overflowing measure of God's spirit in the Apostles' hearts, observes that the reason PHIL. i. 5-8. why they were so full of God was, because they were so empty of His creatures. 'They were very full,' he says, 'because they were so very empty;' because they were so very empty of the spirit of the world, therefore they were so full of the spirit of God.

God's Grace. As by the grace of God we are what we are, so by His PHIL. i. 5-8. grace it is we are not what we are not.

Means of Grace. HE that hopes for the inheritance will make much of the conveyance. PHIL. i. 5-8.

God the Source of Grace. God is a fountain from which each draws water according to his needs: he who needs six buckets draws six; he who needs three, three; the bird who only requires to wet his PHIL. i. 5-8. beak, just pecks at the water, the pilgrim draws from the fountain in the hollow of his hand.

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	PHILIPPIANS III. 17-21.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW XXII. 15-22.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	HOSEA XIV.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	JOEL II. VER. 21 OR JOEL III. VER. 9.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Wisdom of Christ.

He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. S. MATTHEW xxii. 20-22.



THESE words contain a peculiarly characteristic example of our Saviour's mode of teaching, and a profound evangelical principle, applicable to all religious study and instruction.

I. He is at Jerusalem, He is in the Temple. Thither the best and the worst of the nation were gathered together. All the sects, leaders and followers, were there, bent on their several ends. All the people were there, filled with the one impulse which swayed every Jewish heart at the time of the great festival of the Passover. In the midst of them stood one, who was amongst them but not of them; with His own end clear before Him, an end for which He came to bear witness, and for which He was born into the world, but

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an end which soared above the highest imagination of those who were gathered around Him and were seeking to make Him their own. He is to cross their path shortly in a still higher path, and to a still higher end. But now He crosses them in turn, one by one, as a teacher, and the first and most striking example is that contained in the text. Two of the great sections of the Jewish Church and nation approach. They are the Pharisees and Herodians. They have contended for years on one, as it seemed to them, all-important question. 'Was it the duty of the chosen people to submit to the Roman yoke, or to resist?—were they to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?' Everything presented itself to them through that medium. To determine the question on the one side or the other was the great need, which they both sought to supply. There was no escape, as they supposed, from one or other of the two horns of this dilemma; on one or other their victim must be transfixed; on one or other they must receive satisfaction.

It was exactly in this very confidence that they were both disappointed. What they had said with a dim perception of the character which they only partially understood, was the very rock and corner stone on which they stumbled and were crushed. 'The Master' whom they approached was indeed 'true, and taught the way of God in truth; neither did He care for any man, for He regarded not the person of men.' He, the great questioner of mankind, the true discoverer of hearts, burst through this haze of self-illusion, by the same methods (humanly speaking) as that ancient catechiser, the father of human philosophy, had done before Him in the market-place of Athens. He met them with a searching question and with a homely fact: 'Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute-money.' From wide-reaching theories, from hopes of accomplished vengeance, from dreams of successful intrigues, they were brought down, as were the sophists of old, to gather round a small, solid, indisputable fact. We know the appearance of that fact even now. It has been often described; it may still be seen—the little silver coin, bearing on its surface the head encircled with a wreath of laurel and bound round with the sacred fillet—the well-known features, the most beautiful and the most wicked, even in outward expression, of all the Roman Emperors—with the superscription running round, in the stately language of Imperial Rome, *Tiberius Cæsar, divi Augusti filius Augustus, Imperator.*' He looked on the face, He looked on the inscription; as the coin lay on the outstretched palm of His tempters. He asked again, with that same art of the master of ancient irony, 'Whose is this image and superscription?' 'They say unto Him' (they could not but say unto Him) the Imperial name, 'It is Cæsar's.' 'Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto

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Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' The distinction which they had tried to draw between the two conflicting duties vanished away in those words, drawn from a higher than any earthly source. What was due to Cæsar could not be taken from God; what was due to God could not be taken from Cæsar: by giving to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, the things that are God's are also given to God; by rendering to God the things that are God's the things of Cæsar are also given to Cæsar.

Their snare, so skilfully laid on the right hand and on the left, had broken down. He had passed unmoved through the midst of their scholastic distinctions, as He passed unharmed through the midst of the raging multitude. Their serried ranks had opened before Him. A third course of which they had not dreamed was His natural path. Pharisee and Herodian alike were defeated. He was above and beside and beyond their mark—'They marvelled, and left Him, and went their way.'

II. Before we look at the meaning of the words in detail, let us for a few moments pause on the general lesson that it conveys, both as to the mind which was in Christ Jesus and as to our imitation of it. Of all the incidents in the gospel history, there is perhaps none which brings out more fully the most individual peculiarity (so to speak) of His doctrine and character. The characteristic is what a celebrated Christian philosopher of Germany condensed into one pregnant word, more suggestive than many elaborate expositions, and which our less complex language is unable to render by any single expression, *Schicksalslosigkeit*—freedom from the control of destiny, elevation above the level of the fate, the circumstance, the age, in which all around Him were enveloped. They, all wrapt in the narrow folds of their own controversies, parties, systems—they, all moving, as by a tragical irresistible doom, to the destruction which awaited their church and commonwealth; He, sweeping through and beside and athwart all these, with a loneliness of purpose and aim, which cost Him His life as He passed onward through the opposing obstacles—dying in the conflict, yet rising triumphant out of it, over fate, and death, and the grave. It is this part of His course which, above all others, is in one sense inimitable; which brings us so near to the source from whence He came, that the example almost vanishes from our view in the distance from which we contemplate it.

III. The question was put to Him, not sincerely, but 'tempting Him,' and therefore (in one sense) the answer was no answer at all. He took them in their own craftiness; He dealt with them as God ever deals with insincere inquirers, with onesided and unfair search after truth—He silenced without instructing them: He went upon His own lofty course without deigning to decide a mere local and

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temporary controversy. But as there was something in the question of more than transient interest, so there was in the answer something more than a mere rebuke to obstinate and prejudiced minds, a wisdom even beyond that divine indifference, if we may so term it, which I have just ventured to describe.

Insincere as the question was, yet the very fact of putting it at all, the marvel with which they received the answer, shows that they who put it believed it to be a great perplexity, and that their own solution would have been widely different. The Pharisees, in the excess of their religious zeal, could not imagine that any one professing to be a religious teacher could recognise the authority of a heathen power. The Herodians, in the excess of their worldly prudence, could not imagine that any one could share that prudence except those who shared their own worldly spirit. The possibility of an answer which should unite the two had never occurred to either of them for a moment. To each of these opposite frames of mind, our Lord's reply conveyed a lesson of universal truth. The image and superscription told them with indisputable clearness to what government they owed allegiance, and to what great power they owed the unexampled peace, which had now for thirty years reigned through the civilised world. Into any further questions He entered not. Whether that government were heathen or Jewish; whether its blessings were combined with dark idolatries or pure faith, was not now the point; it could not alter the facts of the case, as acknowledged by themselves; and, therefore, that union of respect to the authority of Cæsar and the authority of God, which Pharisee and Herodian alike thought impossible, He pronounced to be possible and necessary. 'Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' Though the government of Rome was despotic, and they had once been free; though the worship of Rome was heathen, and they were the chosen people of Jehovah; though Tiberius Cæsar was stained with crime and tyranny, and they were the guardians of the highest morality of mankind; yea, if there was anything due to him by their own acknowledgment and confession, anything which was duly his on the natural principles of right and justice, they were to render it back to him; and in that very act they were rendering it back to God.

1. 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' Render—so we may first apply it to subjects which our studies inevitably force upon our notice—render to those old heathen times of which we are taught to think and read so much, render to them the praise and honour which is really theirs. Render it, not covertly, furtively, timidly, as though it were a condemned, contraband, suspected concession. Render it openly, fearlessly, religiously, as the doctrine

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of Him who has told us how He will call the nations before His throne, and render to each according to their good or evil works: as the doctrine of the Apostle who has told us, that when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, and show the work of the law written on their hearts; as the doctrine of the early Fathers, who have told us that the heathen sages and heroes lived and taught by the inspiration of the spirit of Christ.

2. Render their due, if to the heathen, then still more the nearer due, whatever it be, to all those whom we condemn, or who condemn us, in the thousand varieties of opinion which intersect the nations and churches of Christendom. Render them their due, not as though it were extorted by a too liberal age, or languidly yielded by indifference or vacillation or indolence; but render it as the sacred offering of Christian justice and the express command of Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.

3. 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' May we not extend the words yet further, to express the evangelical principle implied in other parts of the Gospels? Render to fact, to truth, to reason those things which fact and truth and reason, by an imperial sway, more certainly acknowledged than that of Cæsar, require at our hands. Render to art, to nature, to science, the conclusions which they have fairly won; render to them the honours with which God has invested them by planting on their front that image and superscription of Himself which none can see and doubt. Render this too again, not grudgingly or of necessity, but as remembering that here also God loveth the cheerful giver. Whenever we can lay our finger or plant our foot on an acknowledged fact, in nature, or in language, or in history, cling to it, cherish it, honour it as a fragment of the truth on which we all repose. It may be small and homely in itself as the silver penny of Cæsar's tribute; it may seem contrary, as that did, to all preconceived opinions; but nevertheless, if it be a fact stand by it, not in the name only of science or philosophy, but in the name of God, and in the name of Christ, stand by it, without fear or wavering, well assured that thereby we are doing, not dishonour but honour to the Master 'who, we know, is true, and who teaches the way of God in truth, and who regards not the person of man.'

4. And not in speculation only, but in practice, have fact and reason an imperial demand on our religious obedience. Render to prudence, to wisdom, to common sense their due. How many of our controversies need for their remedy, not theological learning, not ancient precedents, not popular agitation, not sounding watchwords, but a few grains of common prudence, a single spark of good sense

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and discretion. Oh, let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that common sense is more than a mere worldly virtue. It is a Christian, nay (with all reverence be it spoken), a truly Christ-like grace. See how it was practised by Him on this occasion. Remember that it is the very characteristic of His answer, that it took the plain, homely, straightforward view of an intricate and difficult case. He who, amidst all other names, is called 'Wisdom,' 'the Eternal Wisdom of God,' did not disdain, nor should we, His scholars, His disciples, disdain, to be wise in that simple wisdom described in the Book of Proverbs, whence the name was given to Him, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, 'to give to the young man knowledge and discretion.'

A. P. STANLEY.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Christian Walk.

Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

I. UR conversation is in heaven. Conversation properly means citizenship. We are free of the City of God, the New Jerusalem, and we must assert our freedom whenever we are tempted to commit sin. Not only must we say with Joseph, 'How can I do this wickedness?' but, how can I go counter to my privilege as free of the City of God? I must lay hold on the promise, 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,' and if so I shall find the truth of another promise, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'

II. 'From whence also we look for the Saviour.' He is to be expected at any time, and when He comes it will be for the complete and eternal deliverance of all the scattered citizens of the City of God, for He will change their vile bodies, the bodies of their vileness, in which bodies have dwelt their corrupt lusts, so that in their renewed bodies sin shall be impossible, for they shall be renewed in the likeness of His glorious Body.

III. 'According to the working whereby He is able to subdue.' Of all the operations of God that is the most mysterious, by which He endues matter with the properties of spirit. The plenitude of God's

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power was exerted in the Lord's sepulchre, so that that which was buried a natural body rose again as a spiritual one. This is the power of His Resurrection. 'The right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.'

M. F. SADLER.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Citizen's Twofold Stewardship.

Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. S. MATTHEW xxii. 21.

- I.  It is important that we do not misunderstand those words in which, in the text, Christ Himself defines a citizen's responsibilities: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' It has not been uncommon to understand this language as if it defined two separate obligations which were in contrast if not in antagonism to one another.

The words have been read as if Christ had said: 'Here are certain duties which you owe to Cæsar, or to the state. God has nothing to do with those duties (as if God could have nothing to do with any duty!), but you are to render them because you live in a certain land and under a certain rule. And here, again, are certain duties which you owe to God. Cæsar, or the state, has nothing to do with those duties (as though a state could hope enduringly to prosper and ignore God!), but you are to render them because you hold a certain religious belief. Now the important thing is that these two duties should be kept distinct, and you must draw a sharp line round each one of them and take care that neither of them becomes confounded with the other.' Rome says to the state, 'Let me alone. It is mine to define morals and duty, and whether my definitions threaten the good order of society and the spread of intelligence and education among the common people or no, you must not interfere.' And on the other hand, the modern pagan, who has outgrown God and His law and His gospel, says to the Church, 'Let me alone. It is mine to decide what are the duty and obligation of the citizen, whether I seem to you in doing so to threaten the very foundations of all moral distinctions and social order, or not.' This had been the controversy which has raged between Cæsarism and Ecclesiasticism through all

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the Christian centuries, and unlike a great many other controversies, it has raged, not because both sides were right, but because both sides were wrong.

II. More than he is the subject or citizen of any state, is man a citizen and subject of the kingdom of God. And therefore, first of all he is to bring his life under the influence and government of those highest sanctions which come from God. He is to render unto God the things that are God's; and, since all things are God's, he is to consecrate himself and his gifts, first of all, to that highest service, and then, in the spirit of that consecration, he is to do his duty to the community and the state.

His duty. But what is a citizen's duty, as implied in the teaching and spirit of the religion of the New Testament? I may not undertake to define it in detail, but plainly it is in his dealings with his fellow-citizens, with the commonwealth, and with the nation, to illustrate that peculiar spirit which is the distinctive characteristic of Christ and His religion. That characteristic is not its courage in rebuking wrong, nor its justice in dealing with sin, nor its explicitness in defining the divine authority of the personal conscience and moral truth, through all these are in it; but in one word, in its unselfishness. Looking back over the ministry of Christ and His Apostles this is the one principle that interprets the whole. These men and their Divine Leader were burning and throbbing with what the author of *Ecce Homo* has called the enthusiasm of humanity. They saw in their fellows not the actual but the ideal man. They saw in the meanest and guiltiest wretch that lived possibilities of the divinest graces that human character can illustrate. And when they went out from the presence of their Master they went with the determination to make the world better and nobler and happier by what they should do for it. We have a phrase by which we describe one who, in any community, is not so entirely engrossed with his own affairs but that he has some time for the happiness and well-being and advancement of his neighbours, of his city, of his land. We call such a man a public-spirited citizen. The early disciples of the religion of Christ were the most public-spirited citizens whom the world has known.

H. C. POTTER.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Mercy of God.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

HOSEA XIV. I.



WHILE the freeness of God's mercy is the leading idea suggested by these words, it is not the only one ; on the contrary, the condition of our nature is accurately expressed, as is the mode by which alone it can be ameliorated.

I. Consider, first, the state into which man has brought himself. There are few things more important, whether we view mankind collectively or individually, than the fastening on the sinner all the blame of his sin. God may invite the prodigal to return, but God has nothing to do with his wandering away into the desert. Thou hast not fallen through an inherent inability to stand ; He has so constituted thee that thou mightest have stood. Thou hast not fallen through the ground being slippery, and thick-set with snares ; He placed thee where thy footing was firm, and thy pathway direct. Upon man himself come home wholly all the effects of the fall. In whatever degree there may be a necessity of sinning, in no degree is there a necessity of perishing. God places no man in such a moral condition that his falling into perdition is unavoidable. Let a man have once heard of Christ, and from that moment forward salvation is within arm's-length of this man. Is he willing to be saved ? Then he may be saved. Is he unwilling to be saved ? Then, at least, he perishes by his own choice ; and our righteous, and merciful, and redeeming God is clear in judgment when He leaves the obdurate one to the fruit of his own folly.

II. Observe the mode of deliverance, as it may be gathered from the invitation : ' O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God.'

1. The fall did not do away with God's claim on man. Man could not cease to belong to God as a creature, when man had given himself to Satan ; and this important fact is assumed, if not asserted, in the words of our text. The party addressed is the fallen, but the party addressing is still the Lord his God. Disobedience has removed man from the centre to the outskirts of the universe, but in one great sense it could not remove him from God, ' who is that infinite sphere,'

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as expressed by an old writer, 'whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere.'

2. We gather an inference of consolation from the fact that thou, 'Israel hast fallen by thine iniquity.' There is the groundwork of hope, that God will yet look mercifully upon us and restore us, seeing that, notwithstanding alienation, He is still our God. The message, 'Return unto the Lord thy God,' is full of consolation, because it invites us to the Being from whom all our rebellion has not been able to divide us.

3. That which God invites us to do must be possible for us to do. If God calls on us to return we are not at liberty to question that there lies no impossibility against our returning. Now this assumes two things:

a. That God has removed all existing obstacles.

b. That He bestows all requisite assistance in the performance of it.

H. MELVILL.

How to Return to God.

HOSEA xiv. 1, 2.

I. **T**HE first act of the awakened soul is usually an act of prayer, and it is most natural, and indeed most proper, that it should be so. The very act of expressing our need has a tendency both to bring about clearer views of what it is that we need, and to intensify our desire. Inward silence and reserve tend to benumb the faculties and to check the rising desire of the soul, when the outpouring of earnest supplication seems to stir us to our inmost depths.

II. Notice the urgency of this utterance, which God's love puts as it were in our mouths. There is only one kind of prayer that is at all appropriate in the lips of an awakened sinner, who finds himself without God in the world, but who desires to arise and go to His Father: and that is the urgent, specific entreaty for present forgiveness and salvation.

III. The divinely suggested utterance of our text is not only an urgent prayer, but it is also the expression of a distinct change in our moral attitude towards God. It marks the end of the life of aversion from God, and the beginning of a true conversion to God.

IV. When thus with all our hearts we truly seek Him, it will not be long before we become aware of something that seems at first to rise like a barrier between Him and us, shutting us off from all contact with Him. What about our sins? This experience is evidently foreseen in our text, where we have a most definite and specific

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request for an immediate and most necessary benefit. There stands the barrier, and nothing can be done until it is removed; and so the Father's love bids us pray, 'Take away all iniquity.'

W. HAY AITKEN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Christian's Race.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. PHILIPPIANS iii. 15.



WHAT are we to understand by thus minded? At an evening party in Cambridge, some fifty years ago, the Rev. Charles Simeon, giving a family exposition, took for his subject this very verse. And when he had asked what is implied by the expression 'thus minded,' he himself gave answer, and in his usual methodical treatment of Scripture, said, 'It means three things. It means, Let there be no lofty notions, no worldly objects, and no listless habits.'

I. No lofty notions. If it were allowed to any one of the children of men to have lofty notions of their own performances and attainments, that liberty would have been granted to S. Paul. This he shows in his endeavour to convince those who were pharisaically trusting in their own righteousness. There are some persons now, as there were in the times of the Apostle, who think salvation is to be had by the works they have wrought. That idea, after his conversion, S. Paul scorned. No one had a greater claim, so to speak, than he had, as to outward ceremonies. He was canonically circumcised, according to the law and the custom, on the eighth day after his birth. He was of the nation of Israel, and could trace back his genealogy to Jacob and Abraham. He belonged to the privileged tribe of Benjamin, which was descended from Rachel, the wife of Jacob's choice. By both parents he was of Jewish extraction, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a Pharisee, and not only so, but he belonged to the strictest and most punctilious sect of the Pharisees. He had been most zealous in opposing the Christians, who, as he thought, were intent upon destroying Moses and the Prophets. In his earnestness for the law he had ever persecuted the Church of Christ. And then as regards the righteousness which was to be ob-

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tained by legal observances, he was blameless. No one could charge him with any neglect or omission. If, therefore, he argues, any one could enter heaven by his works, he was that person.

But, after his conversion, what were his feelings upon that subject? His lofty notions were gone. Those things, which he before had counted as gain, as so much money, as so much merit, laid up to his account in heaven, he now counted to be loss, an actual hindrance; yea, he nauseated them as dung, because now he expected heaven through Christ, through Christ's Blood and righteousness alone, and not for any works or worthiness of his own.

We must acknowledge that our piety is very stunted and dwarfish compared with what it ought to be. We are but babes, when we ought to be young men and fathers. We are living upon milk, when, by the time of our spiritual experience, we ought to be able to take strong meat. Our deep humiliation ought therefore to be crying, 'We are but unprofitable servants. Woe unto us, the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. Our leanness, our leanness! We have not yet apprehended that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Certainly in us there must be no lofty notions. Again. There must be in us, as in S. Paul—

II. No worldly objects. S. Paul's former position had been one of great influence. He had sat, as a pupil, at the feet of the noted Jewish doctor, Gamaliel. He had profited, or made progress, in the knowledge of the Jews' religion beyond most of his equals in age. He was a man of extensive reading and of classical scholarship. He, therefore, might have secured preferment, or might have made a figure in the literary world, and commanded admiration for his talents and acquirements, had he pleased.

But he did not please. After his conversion his aim was single. That aim was to serve God in the gospel of His dear Son. This was the only thing for which he lived. His desire was to be found in Christ Himself, not clothed in his own righteousness, but clad in the spotless righteousness of Christ, that wedding garment which is unto all and upon all that believe. His desire was also to bring others to the same blessed Redeemer, and thus to add daily to the number of those who should be saved. He had no worldly objects. Rather than be a burden to the converts at Corinth, who were either unable or unwilling to contribute to his support, he cheerfully, as a tentmaker, worked with his own hands. As an Apostle of Christ, he could have demanded suitable maintenance; but he forbore this just right, that the gospel might in no wise be hindered. Like Moses, and like Samuel, he might ask, 'Whose ox or whose ass have I taken?' He had coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; but he had made it

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evident that the whole desire of his heart was to spend and be spent in behalf of that divine Redeemer who had bought him with His Blood. S. Paul had no worldly objects.

How different, alas, is this from the spirit of some who make a profession of religion! Too many have worldly objects. They wish to stand well either with their ministers or with the godly. Or they think their temporal interests will be promoted by joining the Lord's people, mistaking gain for godliness. I hope neither the love of praise, nor the love of money and of advance in life, explains why you take up the lamp of a Christian profession. Let no such worldly objects rule over you; but rather let this be more and more your ambition, to live to the glory of Him who lived and died for you. Are you pious masters? Act as servants of Christ. Are you pious servants? Remember that while you are serving your earthly master, you are really and truly serving not him, but Christ. Yes, this principle of doing everything, whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to the glory of God, will ennoble even the lowest and meanest occupation. God is glorified by the bright shining of the sun. God is equally glorified by the feeble glimmer of the glow-worm. Both shine at the sovereign command of the same Creator, and both answer exactly the purposes for which they were brought into being. While the unconverted sinner always has some worldly project in view, and never rises above the level of self, let it be yours in everything to rise up to Christ. Let there be no worldly objects. But, thirdly, if we would be like-minded with S. Paul, I would add, there must be in us—

III. No listless habits. There are some professed Christians who, by their slothful and negligent walk, lead us to fear that, whatever they may say to the contrary, they have never yet begun to seek the Lord at all. The real Christian is in earnest. What did the Apostle say of his own activity and devotedness of purpose? He compares himself to a racer in the Corinthian games. There would be no listless habits in a man running a race. He would keep his eye fixed upon the goal. He would think nothing of the ground he had already passed over. His only anxiety would be to get through as rapidly as possible the distance which still remained between him and the prize. This, S. Paul tells us, should be the line of conduct pursued by every one of us who is seeking eternal life in heaven.

This, he says, was his own manner of living. He had been called by God in Christ Jesus. He had entered the lists in the Christian race. He was now actually contending for the glorious prize held out to the competitors. 'I forget,' he exclaims, 'the things that are behind. I press forward unto those things that are before. I am straining every nerve. I hasten toward the mark for the prize. I keep my thoughts fixed on the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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And I desire nothing but to finish my course with joy. Nor is this to be the course of action of me only. All must run this same race. And, therefore, let all of us, as many as be perfect and decided Christians, be thus minded. Let us so run. Let there be no listless habits.'

C. CLAYTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Christ's Example. His whole life is our rule ; not His miraculous works, His footsteps walking on the sea, and such like, they are not for our following, but His obedience, holiness, meekness, and humility are our copy which we should continually study. This matchless example is the happiest way of teaching. 'He that follows Me,' says He, 'shall not walk in darkness.' He that aims high, shoots the higher for it, though he shoot not so high as he aims. This is that which ennobles the spirit of a Christian, the propounding of this our high pattern, the example of Jesus Christ.

Good Example. Good example is a language and an argument which everybody understands.

Example and Precept. THE offspring of the teacher is rooted out when he who is born by the word is killed by the example.
JOB xxxi. 8.

Priest's Example. THE minister's life is the people's looking-glass, by which they usually dress themselves.

Earthliness. How often Holy Scripture bids us to lift up our eyes, because we are of our own nature so apt to forget our country and our home and to fix them on the place of our exile.
PHIL. iii. 17-20.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	COLOSSIANS I. 3-12.
GOSPEL,	S. MATTHEW IX. 18-26.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	AMOS III.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	AMOS V or IX.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

God's Promise.

Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence. PSALM xxxi. 20.



AND who are they, of whom the prophet speaketh? Is it a favoured few, a selected and exempted remnant, whom the care of the Eternal shall insulate from the open world, and remove into the silence of the forests or the hills, to contemplate and to adore? Is the secret, the covert, some curtailed or cloistered circle, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where there is leisure to be good? Is it a home with God beyond the grave, in the land far off, where the righteous enters into the peace and light of immortality, resting upon his bed? Is the promise restricted to priests and seers here, or to the just made perfect yonder? No, it is not so. The last preceding words tell us otherwise. The 'they' of this golden oracle are all those who fear Him, all those who trust in Him. The humblest spiritual loyalist to God, the weakest, and the weariest, and the busiest, who hides himself in Him, who commits the way to Him, who commends the spirit to Him; this hidden life, this secret of the Presence, it is for even him.

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And it is for him (we read again in the preceding sentence) as fearing thus, and as trusting thus, before the sons of men. It is for those who avow the Lord as their King, and venture upon His promises, before the sons of men. In the thick of human intercourse, amidst the shock and conflicts of human change, under the hot glare of human observation, out of doors amidst the dissonance of the common day, it is there that this wonderful promise of the Holy Ghost by the Psalmist is to take effect. For so it runs: 'Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee, before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence.'

Such is the scope of the promise; 'for them that fear Thee, them that trust in Thee.' Such is the place of the promise; 'before the sons of men.'

Surrender to Jesus Christ is not a thing reserved for exciting occasions, and artificial conditions. It is for the Christian man to-day, under the environment of this time present, in our own generation, be its obstacles and its problems what they may, so long as they are not of our choosing, but of the will of God. And now I point you again to that familiar field. I invite you out as it were from among the sons of men. And I say, as we survey that scene of realities and of trial, that there, even there, is the intended place not only for a genuine recognition of the rights of Jesus Christ, but for a profound enjoyment of His presence. That bright secret is no curiosity for a spiritual museum. It lives and moves. It is made for use. It is revealed, it is offered, it is given, to be worn and wielded amidst the wear and tear of all that is present, of all that is practical, around us as we are.

Surrender and the presence, the Lord's entire ownership and our invitation to live concealed in the secret of His presence, these both, according to God in His Word, are things altogether meant to work and reign in real life. Nor is this the only tie between these two spiritual facts. They not only walk the same path, but they are locked there by strong embraces into one. They are, I may say, only two poles of one spiritual sphere. Surrender is the negative thing where the presence is the positive. Surrender is the man's turning from himself to his Redeemer, dropping in the act the base plunder of self-love, and stretching out arms capacious, because empty, towards Him. The presence is the Redeemer's meeting the man with the fulness of Himself, with the gift of nothing less than Himself to the creature who brings nothing but necessities and submission. So the two spiritual facts by their own nature eternally complement each other. We have all often confessed this, ay and

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ourselves claimed to act upon it, as we have knelt believing and receiving at the Table of the Feast of Christ. 'Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies; humbly beseeching Thee that all we may be fulfilled with Thy grace.'

That glorious complex, surrender and the presence, is the liberty of the life of grace, and its inviolable peace, and ever-springing power. In that supreme paradox, the gospel, these sacred paradoxes have their vital place. An absolute submission is the secret of a perfect freedom. A supernatural peace, an inward dwelling in the divine covert, is the secret of a life wonderfully enabled for holy energy and action along the daily path.

But now to look direct upon this latter; this hiding in the secret of His presence before the sons of men.

This promise is akin to a whole host of promises. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee;' 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;' 'He leadeth me beside the waters of repose;' 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts;' 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; in Me ye shall have peace;' 'Come unto Me all ye that labour, and I will rest you; ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

I. Here first observe the paradox of such words, then their promise. The paradox is, as I have said, that the Christian life is on the one hand meant to know no rest nor holiday from obedience to the law of duty, from hourly serving our generation in the will of God; yet, on the other hand, at the very heart of this life there is always to be this mysterious stillness, this secret place of peace. Not from an inner tumult of wrestling energies is to come that life's true power, but from this hidden calm. The unfatigued willingness to suffer, to sacrifice, to labour, to sympathise, to bestow, is to leap continually from a spring in itself as silent as it is profound. A life all activity (or perhaps all suffering) at the circumference, and revolving amidst the tangled things of the common hour, is yet to move upon a central point of rest,

'With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On the soft axle.'

The world, the flesh, the tempter, all will be present, formidable parts of the Christian's circumstances; but, 'Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence.' Thronging duties may press him hard; but, Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence. Sufferings of body, anguish of spirit, may strike upon the life. And grace is no anæsthetic; the Christian is no Stoic; he is follower and member of the Lord of Bethany, and of Gethsemane; he feels,

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he grieves, indeed; yet, 'Thou shalt hide him in the secret of Thy presence.' Or look another way altogether. Take life in its most vivid, its most pleasing interests and occupations. So these things lie for the man in the line of the will of God, and so the man fears Him, and trusts Him, before the sons of men, the paradox of grace is that in these things also 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence.'

It is indeed an enigma, as is almost every other great fact of the religion of the Bible. But none the less it is, it is indeed a promise. 'Thou shalt hide them: ' 'I will give thee rest; ' 'Ye shall find rest unto your souls; ' 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts.'

Those last sacred words, remember, are a promise. We are accustomed to hear them in another and indeed a soul-moving form. As the hour of worship closes, as the communicants prepare to leave the precincts of the Table, when

'The feast, though not the love, is past and gone,'

then the pastor lets the flock go with the invocation upon them of the peace of God. It is an invocation rich in significance and power. But do not forget that its divine original, in the Philippian Epistle, is not an invocation but a precise and positive promise. True, it is a promise under conditions; above all under the condition that 'in everything we make known our requests to God.' But that granted, then there follows nothing less than this certainty and guarantee, 'The peace of God shall keep your hearts.' Need I count it out of place and time here to point to that strong future tense, that wonderful 'shall,' and ask myself, and ask my brethren, if we have proved it true? I will ask the question, I will humbly press it on the soul. Here is the voice of God, the warrant of God: have we made our claim under it, and found it to mean what it says? Ah, many, well I know, have so done and have so found. For myself, so far as a sinful man may venture personally to affirm, I know enough to dare to say the ground is good, if a man use it lawfully. There is a peace of God, able indeed to keep, to safeguard, the weakest and the most treacherous heart. There is a presence that makes at life's centre a stillness, pregnant with positive and active blessing. There is a fulfilling that can counterwork the fulness of the thronging hours, and enable men in the stress of real life to live behind it all with Jesus Christ, while they are all the while alert and attentive for the next call of duty, and the next. The Christian is indeed to be ever seeking, ever aspiring upward, not as though he had already attained. He is to avoid as his most deadly poison that subtle spiritual Pharisaism which plumes itself upon a supposed advanced experience,

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and presumes to compare itself with others, and hesitates, if but for a moment, to prostrate itself in confession and penitence before the awful, the blessed holiness of God. But none the less the Christian is called to a great rest as well as to a great aspiration. He is called to a great thanksgiving as well as to a deep confession. He is called, he is commanded, to an entrance into the peace of God. It is not to be the habit of his soul to say, or to sing, that he should be happy if he could cast his care on his Redeemer, and sink in His Almighty arms. It is to be his, on the ground of all the promises, to do it; and to be at rest in God.

Conditions there are indeed to that great peace; so we have remembered. But they are conditions each of them in its nature a heavenly blessing. There is the condition of godly fear. There is the condition of humble trust. There is the condition of trusting thus before the sons of men; let not that be forgotten. There is the condition of coming direct to Jesus Christ, to take the yoke of His word and will. There is the condition of looking unto Him. There is the condition of watching and of prayer. But are these things a complicated and grievous burthen, a bundle of arbitrary exactions? They are only so many forms of that one great condition to our finding what is laid up for us in our Lord; the condition of coming into directest contact with Himself, and there abiding. Such contact, in God's own order, liberates unto the believing suppliant the virtues of Jesus Christ. Not peace only, but His peace is given.

It is a wonderful thing to be permitted to watch a life which you have reason to know is hid in the secret of the presence of the Lord. Some few years ago I met a good man, humble and gentle, a missionary to Eastern Africa. He abode in the presence, I could not but see it. I heard him tell, with the eloquence of entire simplicity, how in the tropical wilderness, in the deep night, he had waited for and shot the raging lion which had long been the unresisted terror of a village clan. It could not be the will of God, he reasoned, that this beast should lord it over men; and so, as it were in the way of Christian business, he went forth and put it to death. And then I watched that man, a guest in my own house, under the very different test of the inconvenience of disappointed plans; and the secret of the presence was as surely with him then as when he had lain quietly down to sleep in his tent on the lonely field, to be roused only by the sound of the lion's paw, as it rent the earth at the open door.

I have marked the secret of the presence as it ruled and triumphed in young lives around me here. I recall a conversation on the subject. It was with a friend and student of my own, a loving Christian, but also an ardent and most vigorous athlete. Could the peace of God keep him, he wondered and inquired, when the strong temper was

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ready to take fire in the rush and struggle of the game? And the answer came in a quite thankful word three days later: 'Yes, I asked Him; I trusted Him; and He kept me altogether.'

I have watched lives in which the secret of the presence has been drawn around mental studies and competitions. It has made the man care for his subject not less but more. It has made him not less but more intent to do well, to do better, to do best; *αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων*. But it has taken the poison out of competition, by bringing into it Jesus Christ. And so has come the honest aim to win knowledge and to train faculty for Him, and to lay up just such prestige as might perchance subserve His ends in His disciple's life. And equally and at the same time it has prepared the man's spirit for the blessed bitterness of disappointment.

III. The secret of the presence can assert itself in our times, as of old, in the awful hours of life. It can give now as long ago to the suffering confessor those *divinæ martyrum consolationes* which a prisoner of the Reformation found, with astonished joy, filling not another's soul but his own in the grim dungeon. A few years ago, in a mountain town, in the province of Fuh-kien in China, two men, recent converts to the Lord, were beset by a furious mob, and hung up each to a tree, to be beaten there to death. The elder, a sturdy peasant, who had often pleaded with his neighbours even to tears for Christ, fearing for the firmness of his younger friend, called out to him, 'Do not forget Him who died for us; do not deny Him.' 'But indeed,' said the other, as he very simply told the story soon after to his friend and mine, the Rev. Robert Stewart, 'indeed he needed not to say it. The Holy Ghost so filled me that I felt no fear or trouble.' Rescue, by a detachment of Chinese soldiery, came just in time; not too soon to have allowed the confessors fully to prove, not the bitterness of death, but the glorious secret of the presence.

Now God be thanked for conspicuous spiritual miracles such as this, and such as that great martyr-triumph just five years ago in inner Africa, by the shore of the Victoria Lake, when those young saints of God ascended their fiery chariot, singing with loud voices the praises of their Saviour upon their own red funeral pile. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, even in such straits as these; the secret of His presence is as powerful now as when it worked open miracle in the Chaldean furnace. But it is often well to turn from the swelling thoughts suggested by the exceptional and the heroic in the records of the gospel, to the sober questions of the uneventful lifetime, and the common scene, and the transfiguring power of the blessed secret there. And as I do so, a name, a face, a presence rises on my soul. I see one whose life for long, long years I watched indeed with microscopic nearness. I see a Christian woman, sur-

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rendered at all hours to the never-ceasing doing of the nearest and least romantic duty; open on every side to every appeal for aid, for toil, for love; the summer sunshine of the full and busy home; the friend of every needing, every sinning life, in the wide, poor parish; experienced indeed in the pure joys which come to hearts that forget themselves, but called again and again to agonies of sorrow. And I see this life, in its radiant but unconscious beauty, at once, and equally, and with a living harmony, practical down to the smallest details, and filled with God; open to every whisper, to every touch, that said 'I want you,' and hidden, deep hidden, morning, noon, and night, in the secret of the presence. 'That life was a long miracle, 'and long the track of light it left behind it,' to the praise of His grace who shone out from its blessed depths. Let me give Him thanks for it indeed. It is not past, it is not lost; only hidden a little deeper than before with Christ in God, where

'Yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven, without restraint.'

In Christ, a son needs not to say, *Mater, ave atque vale*. The secret of the presence includes both worlds, and folds them into one.

As we draw our meditation towards its close, I revert to the precise wording of my text. 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence,' *Ussether pancyka*, 'in the covert of Thy countenance.' It is a glorious stroke of the divine poetry; the covert, the secret, of His countenance. We find kindred phrases elsewhere in the precious Psalter; the shelter of the brooding wings of the Eternal, the abode in His mighty shadow. But this phrase stands out a peculiar treasure, 'the secret of Thy countenance.' There is no shadow here; it is 'a privacy of glorious light.' And what a light! It is light that lives. It is a photosphere within which opens upon the happy inmate the sweetness and the response of a personal while eternal smile. It is not It but He. It is not a sanctuary but a Saviour, and a Father seen full in Him, giving to the soul nothing less than Himself indeed in vivid intercourse. It is the Lord, according to that dear promise of the Paschal evening, coming to manifest Himself, and to make His abode with the man, and to dwell in him, and he in Him. It means the spirit's sight of Him that is invisible. It means a life lived not in Christianity but in Christ, who is our life.

And thus the word takes us, out in the open, out before the sons of men, and amidst the strife of tongues, to the deep central glory of the gospel, that it may be ours in humble, wondering possession. The gospel, the *εὐαγγέλιον*, what is it? Subordinately, it is many things. It is the revelation of the redemption of our nature, by the work of the Incarnate Son wrought once and for ever for us. It is the

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message of the unutterable mercy of that pardon which moved the prophet's awe-stricken wonder, 'Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?' It is the message of the bringing of the guilty, in penitent faith, into the sublime amnesty of the Holy One, because of His own gift of His own begotten, who died, the just for the unjust, the propitiation of our sins. It is the message of the more than restoration of our fallen nature in our second head. It is the bringing out of life and immortality from shadows into the light. It is the revelation of wonderful possibilities of benefit and blessing for this life present, in even its temporary aspects, ever since it has been possible to say of all men, yea, of the lowest and the worst of human persons, or human tribes, 'for whom Christ died.' But the inmost glory of the gospel, the mysterious central brightness of its message, what is it? It is the giving by God of Himself to man. It is man's union, and then communion, with none other than God in Christ. For this was prophecy and preparation; patriarchs, and priests, and kings. For this was Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Golgotha, and Joseph's garden, and the hill of the Ascension, and the fiery shower of Pentecost. For this was righteousness imputed, and holiness imparted, and the immortal redemption of our body revealed. Here, and no lower, from our point of sight, lies the final cause of all the saving process. It was in order that God, with infinite rightness, and with all the willingness of eternal love, might give Himself to man, and dwell in man, and walk in him, and shine out from him, in measure here, hereafter perfectly.

So we will come and take; for He stands in act to give. So it shall be ours to say, in the sweet English of a Hindoo Christian poetess,

'In the Secret of His Presence how my soul delights to hide,
Ah, how hallowed are the lessons that I learn at Jesus' side.'

We are invited, here and now, in Jesus Christ, into the secret of the countenance of God. To enter there in the blessed Name is not presumption; it is submission. And the result, the practice—what will it be? The humblest walk of duty; the simplest and least ostentatious, but most genuine, denial of the life of self; the daily uptaking of the unpretentious cross; something always to do, or to be, for others and for the Lord; while in it, and over it, and behind it all, rules a peace which does in sober fact pass understanding, keeping heart and thought; the safeguard of the secret of the countenance of our King.

H. C. G. MOULE.

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II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

The Standard of Effort.

We . . . do not cease to desire . . . that ye might walk worthy of the Lord.
COLOSSIANS i. 10.



RELIGION has many aspects. Its atmosphere varies. Its colour changes. It falls in, in many ways, with the moods of nature, and with the moods of man. Sometimes it appears to us all sunshine, sometimes little else than cloud. But indeed—like human life, of which it is the only real philosophy—the dusk and the sunshine are intermingled, and in it, if there is a breadth of untroubled heaven, there

is sure to follow the shadow of the clouds.

Besides, then, the definite and exact teachings which come from the Catholic faith at special times, in Advent or in Lent or Eastertide—now the mind is turned to wider views and the more general aspect of our religion; and if we dwell, in the main, on some one aspect, if we examine it for the moment from some one point of view, we shall not be disloyal to the spirit of the Church, and, with God's blessing, we shall not be wasting our time.

I. There are before man two solemn certainties—life and death. On death, in spite of all its unapproachable seriousness and its unrelenting rigour, we may exercise an influence, but this can be done only through our dealings with life. As we live, so, on the whole, we shall die. To die well we must live well. It is on the conduct of life that the character of death will depend.

To think deeply and carefully how best to deal with life, is, then, of the last importance. It may be looked at from many points of view; it may be illuminated by different lights; it may be realised in its importance under many figures. There is one often before the religious mind which may help us to think worthily of our duty. Life is a journey.

II. Time goes on, year follows year, and in each, man has a sense that there is a fresh turn in his path, a new reach of road. But further upon that road are gathered vast funds of accumulated experience. That road may, we feel, be travelled wisely and well, or many turns may be taken and precious opportunities may be wasted, and though errors may be, in a measure, corrected, yet the sad thing is that never entirely can we retrace our steps. The journey must go on, but the character of our advance depends upon ourselves. It is

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natural, then, and right that the great Apostle, with the real yearnings of a father's heart, should pray that the conduct of life should not be careless; that the onward march should not be haphazard; that the journey, in fact, should not be at random; that there should be effort, honest, unflagging; that there should be a standard by which effort should be measured; that 'the walk' should be 'worthy of the Lord.'

III. Ah! indeed we are travellers, each of us, advancing on a mysterious journey, a journey which each of us can travel once and no more. Doubtless it has been before now, doubtless it will be again, full of startling turns and unexpected vicissitudes. Some who were our companions have parted from us, separated by circumstance, by opinion, by misconception, by distance, by death, but the soul is advancing still on its lonely path of added experience, with chequered lights and darkness, of sorrow or of hope. Still we are here, each of us, with our personal progress to be made, with our special opportunities, with our individual trials. With gifts to use and sins to conquer, with graces to store in the soul's recesses and virtues to make our own in the efforts of duty, with joys to rejoice in, with self-denial to practise, with others to succour and others to love, our journey is going onward in this strange scene of our probation, and before us, coming nearer, 'the valley of the shadow.'

We once heard of the changing world, and its pathos to us was poetry, and its story a touching tale. Now we know it. It has touched ourselves. We are really on a journey, and the afternoon is deepening and the shadows of the evening beginning to lengthen, and we are conscious, all too severely, of the nearness of the night. How shall we meet it? How shall we deal with the burden of past experiences, and look with strength and courage into the unknown possibilities of the future? In what temper shall we stand against the seductions of sadness and the spectral phantoms of doubt? Shall we submit with a fatalistic Kismet, and bear the inevitable as best we may? Shall we gaze with petulance, or arrogance, or vexation on the river around us, or on the river within? Shall we be cynics and scornful, when life shows itself so full of sorrow, so rich in mistake and trouble, in disaster, in degeneracy, in decay? No, surely! Life's journey has a guiding principle. Triumphant faith grows clearer and more buoyant to those who by that light are guiding their journey.

'Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be—
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid."'

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Faith grows clearer to those who seek Him as the journey goes on. It is faith which gives vigour and nobility to effort, because it keeps before the soul the great things yet to be. It encourages to the effort to realise the passing character of all that is, in its present condition, but the everlasting character of all that is godlike and heavenly—of duty nobly done, of sorrow bravely borne, of work energetically carried out, of self-seeking crushed and self-sacrifice endured, and gentleness, and courage, and penitence, and peace, and self-denying love.

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Raising of Jairus's Daughter.

S. MATTHEW ix. 18, 19, 23-26.

I.  HE miracles of raising from the dead, whereof this is the first, have always been regarded as the mightiest outcoming of the power of Christ; and with justice. They are those, also, at which unbelief is readiest to stumble, standing as they do in more direct contrast than any other to all which our experience has known. The line between health and sickness is not definitely fixed; the two conditions melt one into the other, and the transition from this to that is frequent. In like manner storms alternate with calms; the fiercest tumult of the elements allays itself at last; and Christ's word which stilled the tempest did but anticipate and effect in a moment that what the very conditions of nature must have effected in the end. But between being and the negation of being the opposition is not relative, but absolute; between death and life a gulf lies, which no fact furnished by our experience can help us even in imagination to bridge over. It is nothing wonderful, therefore, that miracles of this class are signs more spoken against than any other among all the mighty works of the Lord.

II. Note the relation in which the three miracles of this transcendent character stand to one another; for they are not exactly the same miracle repeated three times over, but may be contemplated as in an ever-ascending scale of difficulty, each a more marvellous outcoming of the great power of Christ than the preceding. Science itself has arrived at the conjecture that the last echoes of life ring in

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the body much longer than is commonly supposed ; that for a while it is full of the reminiscences of life. This being so, we shall at once recognise in the quickening of him who had been four days dead a still mightier wonder than in the raising of the young man who was borne out to his burial ; and again, in that miracle a mightier outcoming of Christ's power than in the present, wherein life's flame, like some newly extinguished taper, was still more easily rekindled, when thus brought in contact with Him who is the fountain-flame of all life. Immeasurably more stupendous than all these will be the wonder of that hour, when all the dead of old, who will have lain (some of them many thousand years) in the dust of death, shall be summoned from, and shall leave, their graves at the same quickening voice.

R. C. TRENCH.

The Touch of Faith.

She said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

S. MATTHEW IX. 21.

I. **H**OW many evils sin has brought into the world. The seeds of sin are lying dormant in our souls, and even when brought into God's family, and made His children by adoption and grace, we still unite in the mortifying confession, 'There is no health in us.'

II. Another reflection drawn from the history is, that we are too much disposed to seek human help, instead of going directly to God.

III. However deep-seated and desperate the condition of the soul's wealth, the Saviour can help us.

IV. Note the secrecy with which the afflicted woman sought help of Jesus. 'Nor is her wish for secrecy unbelief, but simply humility—humility, accompanied with such faith in Him that she feels assured that a touch of His raiment will suffice.'

J. N. NORTON.

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IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Seeking Good, and hating Evil.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live : and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good. AMOS v. 14, 15.



NOTHING can exceed the simplicity of these words, and yet they embody, if rightly understood, the whole of religion.

I. Seek good. Seek the highest good in the best way. The highest good is God Himself, who is willing to give Himself even to the sinner. Thus Isaiah : 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.' If God gives to us Himself, He gives us all good for time and for eternity.

But seek the highest good in the best way, and that is in the way of redemption. Seek it through faith in Him whom the Father hath revealed. Seek it in His Name, through His intercession. Plead His merits. Partake of His Sacraments.

II. And not evil. A little further the prophet says : 'Hate the evil, and love the good.' It is no use attempting to seek good unless we hate the evil, for if we are to seek the good, we must love it. And this brings with it all that the Bible, or rather, God in the Bible, says about a change of heart, about the new covenant in which God promises to put His law in the heart, and write it in the mind. Seek, then, the Spirit of God, and by seeking Him you seek the love of God.

M. F. SADLER.

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V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Efficacy of Prayer.

Pray without ceasing. I THESS. v. 17.



PRAYER in history. Let your imagination grasp the vast place which prayer holds in the whole history of our humanity. Man, as you look at him broadly, does set his faculties to move in three directions. He moves out towards nature to draw out its resources for his advantage; and that is civilisation. Its history begins where the savage hunts his prey, or scratches the soil and throws in his grains for the beginning of agriculture. It passes through all that varied history of industry which reaches up to that vast complexity of the modern system of civilisation, by which the resources of the farthest corners of the earth are brought together to the centres where men live, for their convenience and for their luxury. All this activity of prayer, seen in its various strange forms till it reaches up to rational consistency in the prayers of the Son of Man, all this activity of prayer could not have been evoked, could not have developed, could not have subsisted unless man by praying had been really in relation to the God who hears; unless all this activity of prayer had been in real correspondence with the fact, and the most fundamental fact on which the universe is built.

II. God and the individual. Secondly, there is no doubt that a great many people recognise in a vague sort of way that somehow prayer is a real activity of human life. They cannot so far separate themselves from the inner man as to deny that. But to kneel down and pray for this or that seems to postulate a knowledge of God about me, an attention of God to me in particular which, when I consider the vastness of the universe, appears altogether preposterous to suppose.

There are a great many cases in which we need to distinguish between our imagination and our reason. This is one. True it is that the imagination of man falls absolutely baffled before the task of imagining how the conscience of God and the activity of God

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which are over all things absolutely, can still comprise an individual knowledge, and an individual attention directed to every particular atom and part of that great universe. Our imagination, I say, is absolutely baffled. But you know quite well that if you take the elementary facts with which physical science deals, like the existence of ether, on which all modern theories of light and heat are based, or the vastness of the solar system, in the same degree your imagination is absolutely baffled. You may not be able to draw a mental picture of things which still your reason may postulate, may force you to believe. Now let your reason go to work; and you will find that it comes very near to postulating about God just this very thing which you find it so hard to imagine. All human knowledge and action as it advances to perfection both widens in range, while at the same time it becomes more detailed in application. Carry up that thought until you can perceive the perfect consciousness of God, and you will find that it postulates that God's knowledge and action shall be at once over all His creatures whatsoever; but that the universal range and scope of the divine attributes shall diminish not one whit from their particular and personal application, so that God created us, and loves us, and knows us, and deals with us one by one as individually, as particularly, as if there were none other created or none so loved. Prayer is possible as the real request addressed by an individual soul out of its individual needs to the Almighty and Universal Father, because that Fatherhood of God is not wider in its range than it is absolutely particular and individual in its protecting, in its creating, in its predestinating love.

III. Prayer and Providence. Thirdly. But God knows so much better than I do what I want. That prayer, the asking God out of my short-sighted folly to give me this or that, is surely a very ignorant procedure. Had I not better put a general trust in God and go on my way submitting to His providence? That is one of the cases in which a thought can take very devout expression while at the same time it may cut at the root of practical religion. For we all know that this appeal, we need not pray because God knows already what we want, allows even too easily of our going on our way and practically leaving God out of our lives. Our Lord knew well enough that the object of prayer was not to inform God; 'your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask it.' The object of prayer is not to inform God; but it is to train us in habits of personal intercourse with God, of personal sonship towards Him. We are made for sonship, sonship is personal correspondence, personal, intelligent co-operation with God. It is a gradually increasing power of familiarity with God; of intercourse with Him, of approach toward Him as person to person.

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Exactly as truly there are stores of blessings which God intends for you, but which He will not give to you unless you energetically correspond with His law, with His method, by prayer. Prayer is as fruitful a correspondence with the method of God as work, as fruitful and as necessary. Some things you can obtain by work without prayer; some things you can obtain by prayer without other work; some things by the combination of working and praying; but no things at all without your co-operation: and co-operation by prayer has no kind of rational difficulty attendant upon it which does not attend equally upon co-operation by the method of work. You have no kind of right to put the reign of law as an obstacle to prayer unless you are prepared to make the reign of law an obstacle to your doing anything to get your own living. CANON GORE.

The Religion of Christ not of Man but for Man.

Then said I, Lo, I come in (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God. HEBREWS x. 7.

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me. S. JOHN iv. 34.

IT is so easy to treat religion as a matter of opinion and discussion without putting our conscience and will into living a Christian life, that there is danger of our losing sight of the one deepest and yet most practical question. Opinion is not faith. Views of religion are not religious convictions. Discussions of Christianity are not Christian righteousness. We are to think now of Christ's own answer to the question why He came. The words are spoken to God the Father by the Son: 'I come to do Thy will;' but they are spoken for our sake.

I. Remember, the will was done on the earth and not in heaven, done among men, not angels; among such men as some of those you dealt with last week, and very likely were disgusted with, men not fair but mean, not trusty, not pure or patient or true or generous or reverent; among women whose hearts were not unstained, whose tongues were not charitable, whose temper was not gentle, unwomanly women, not much like those who, Christ said, should be mother and sisters to Him. Among such people, in a vicious, selfish, grasping, dishonest, over-reaching, monopolising, crucifying society, one Man, born of woman, did God's will. And what is wonderful, the next sentence tells us how He did it, or what the doing of it was to Him. 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work.' His meat! To be homeless and friendless, to be misunderstood and hated, to toil all day with the multitude in the market

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places, teaching stupid pupils and healing unthankful lepers, and then to watch and pray all night on the mountain that He might know or do that Father's will more perfectly, this was His meat. It was to Him what eating is to hunger. It fed Him, refreshed Him, the joy of a feast. It satisfied Him. Think of this as your idea of religion. More than that. He saw the future Church rising and spreading in all lands, true worshippers in it, saints loving it and giving money and labour to spread it; missionaries sailing and travelling for Him; martyrs holding their hands in the fire, and singing in prisons for Him; the Cross shining on the shores of far-off islands and in the deserts of dark continents; pagan wildernesses turned into the fruitful fields and wedlock-guarded homes of a peaceful industry, hospitals, orphan houses, asylums, shelters, sons and daughters of God running, waiting, denying themselves, helping neighbours, in His name—all this He saw coming after Him. This was the meat that satisfied Him, 'content to do that will.' It appears more and more what religion was to Him.

II Then one of His Apostles brings this reality over from the Master to His followers and hands it down from Christ to us. For you and me, in some practical way and in some glorious measure, it is possible to be doing the will of God. He puts it in the form of a benediction, and thousands of ministers say it over in churches to departing congregations hurrying away and scarcely thinking what the blessing is. 'Now may He who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ make you perfect in every good work, to do His will.' Notice, the last four words tell us what good work or perfect work is. Whether your daily occupation shall be good or bad depends on something within it, out of sight, not got as a handicraft or a profession or a lesson or a fortune is got; what we call the spirit of it, a fine, invisible quality, finer than the air, which runs through it all. The work itself is one thing, the spirit of the work is another. We live in two worlds at once—another besides this one which yields us what we eat and wear and earn and spend and lay up. Even the earth and sky, in one of our rare bright days, have more in them than what we see, and we know it in another way. The glory is not in the chemistry of the soil, the compound of the atmosphere, the anatomy of the hills, the vegetable substances. You cannot analyse it with any of your crucibles—the uplift of the morning, the mystery of the moonlight, the majesty of the mountain top. And as we are not materialists we may as well acknowledge that there is such a thing as spiritual beauty. No sunrise sheds over the lands or pours into our eyes all the light in which we walk and work. And so of the work itself. Put aside all the outward results. They will be put aside presently. They will go from you or you from them, fugitive posses-

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sions, your life itself fugitive. What makes your life good work, strong work, lasting work, more and more perfect work? Hear the answer. 'Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will.' Touch all this toil and drudgery with that divine breath, divine with the divinity of Christ. Take that for your motive. Let in upon your work this heavenly illumination. You may be a servant, but never a slave. You are the Lord's and your own freeman. The gains will not be sordid. The mill will not grind out hardship and cruelty in the owner and overseer, with bitterness and rebellion in the operative. The will of God is a large will. It emancipates, it equalises, it gives titles of mobility impartially. Where it is there is liberty. Capital does not there tyrannise over labour; labour does not kill or burn capital. Judah does not vex Ephraim; Ephraim poor and weak does not envy privileged Judah. Rifle bullets on the borders are not then fired at a woman or child by savages whom Christian missions ought to have converted. And all this because of the everyday obedience to the everlasting will; all because that ceaseless prayer offered by the lips of millions of believers from age to age, the common liturgy of Christendom, 'Thy will be done on earth,' is answered. Nothing that you can count or reckon or weigh or eat or wear is the fruit of your labour, the treasure laid up. Your body will wear out, over-tasked, diseased, run down by time. God's consuming fire will try every man's work of what sort it is: but even His fire is love, and the soul of the workman who doeth His will, His obedient child, is safe.

BISHOP HUNTINGTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Intercessory Prayer. 'If I was ever brought into the kingdom of God,' said a venerable Christian lady, 'it was owing to the intercessions of old Dr. L. He married me, and he used often to call and speak a few earnest words to me about my soul. "You are now a wife and a mother," he would say; "do not delay to give yourself to the Lord, and to pray for grace to fulfil your duties. I shall never cease to plead for you."' The thought that a man of God was pleading for her before God, as well as pleading with her at the bar of her own conscience, was the point which seems to have made the impression. 'Why all this earnestness? Are not my own

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impressions far below what they ought to be, when my Heavenly Father, good men on earth, and holy angels in heaven, are so deeply concerned for me? Shall I be careless about my own eternal interests when heaven and earth are in constant communication respecting them?' This was the word of power which, like a touch to the helm of a vessel, turned the direction of her soul for time and eternity.

A Strong Church. 'Is it a strong congregation?' asked a man respecting a body of worshippers. 'Yes,' was the reply. 'How many members are there?' 'Seventy-six.' 'Seventy-six! Are they so very wealthy?' 'No, they are poor.' 'How, then, do you say it is a strong church?' 'Because,' said the gentleman, 'they are earnest, devoted, at peace, loving each other, and striving together to do the Master's work. Such a congregation is strong, whether composed of a dozen or five hundred members!' And he spoke the truth.

Heaven a Prepared Place for a Prepared People. A scoffing infidel, of considerable talents, being once in the company of a person of slender intellect, but a real Christian, and supposing, no doubt, that he should obtain an easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, put the following question to him: 'I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die; can you tell me what sort of a place heaven is?' 'Yes, sir,' replied the Christian, 'heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom you will never enter there.'

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	JEREMIAH XXIII. 5-8.
GOSPEL,	S. JOHN VI. 5-14.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	MICAH IV. OR V. VER. 8.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	MICAH VI. OR VII.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Cessation of Prophecy.

Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. MALACHI iv. 4, 5.



THESE are almost the last words of the Old Testament; they come in their place, not by accident, but because it is really the last word of prophecy uttered before the gospel was declared. Of Malachi himself we know nothing but his name; when he lived we can only guess. It is thought that it was about the time of Nehemiah's last visit to Jerusalem, because the sins that he charges the people with are much the same that Nehemiah records at that time; but the Jews say that he was a little later. However this may be, it is certain that he was the last of the prophets. He wrote this short book, having most likely spoken the words of it, as the prophets generally did, in the ears of the people, before they were written down; and men knew that they were the words, not of Malachi only,

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but of the Lord God of Israel, whose messenger he was. Then Malachi's work was done, his message ended; and sooner or later, after he had spoken this prophecy, he doubtless fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers.

And after him there arose not any like him. A thousand years before, the Lord had called Moses and made Himself known to him. He had been with Joshua and the other valiant men of Israel, strengthening them from time to time as He saw need; and then, after hiding Himself for a time, had spoken to men constantly for the last six hundred years. From the days of Samuel to these days of Malachi there had never been a generation without prophets, men who were chosen by God to speak the words of God. Much had happened in that time. Saul was made king and unmade; David and Solomon reigned gloriously; the nation was torn in two, and half became false to God; times grew worse, sin yet more general, and at last all the nations were carried out of their own land. They were now restored, and, weak as they were, were at last in some sort of comfort and prosperity. But all the while, amid their good or evil deserts, there had been one constant presence, the prophets of the Lord had been among them, telling them of their sins when at the worst, encouraging them whenever any made an effort to amend; sometimes honoured, sometimes persecuted, but never silent. Latterly, the prophets had begun, not only to speak what God bade them to the men of their own day, but to write some or all of the things they said, that later generations might read. Thus they had done for nearly four hundred years, from the days of Joel to Malachi's own. The Word of the Lord, that had begun from the day that He spake to Moses in Horeb, had been ever growing; there were to be found in Israel writings that came, not out of the minds of men, but out of the depths of the Spirit of the Eternal, books wherein every word was true, for they were the words of God Himself.

Now this was to be changed. Malachi died, and no other took his place. No man arose who came to Israel and said, 'Thus saith the Lord.' They were not left ignorant of the will of God, but they had to learn it, not from a living voice speaking among them, but from the books already written. They were indeed to learn something more some day, but not yet. It was enough for the present if they would keep what they had. 'Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments:' if they remembered that, all would be well.

And they did remember it. Partly, perhaps, from the remembrance of the great punishment of the captivity at Babylon; still more, I think, we may gather from the influence of the upright, single-hearted

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governor Nehemiah, and of Ezra, Malachi himself, and the other priests and prophets of this generation, the work was done which all God's miracles and all His former prophets had failed to do. The Jews henceforth would stick to their law and to the name of their God, whom before they had always been so ready to forsake. There was no lack of grievous sin among the Jews, there never yet was a whole nation of righteous men, and never will be; but, as a nation, they were what God had commanded them to be, a holy nation. They were persecuted by the heathen that ruled over them, as Daniel foretold: 'They shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days'; but in one way they did not fall, they would not fall down and worship the images which the kings of the Gentiles set up: their fall was only 'to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.' It is of this age of Israel's history that the Apostle is chiefly thinking where he speaks of those 'who through faith . . . were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword;' and all this they were content to bear rather than forget or forsake the law of Moses the servant of the Lord.

Yet all this time they had no prophet among them. When the temple was profaned by the heathen, and the high priest abandoned Jerusalem and fled into Egypt, so that the people had to choose a high priest for themselves, they were perplexed, and longed for a prophet to teach them, in God's name, how they were to act; but no prophet came. Afterwards, when peace was restored to Jerusalem, and Israel and Judah were able to live peaceably, as in the old days of Solomon, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, many of the sins of old time reappeared; but no prophet was sent to rebuke them. And one of the old sins, at least, had disappeared altogether. The nation was as firmly set against idolatry in the days of its prosperity as in the days of persecution. Whether they broke the law or kept it, they professed to honour it: the excuses they made for breaking it, which we hear of in the gospels, wicked and hypocritical as they were, yet showed that it was worth while for wicked men to be hypocritical, that neither their own feelings, nor those of their neighbours, would allow them to go on in open ungodliness.

However, whether the lessons taught by the former prophets were faithfully learned or no, they were not repeated. Four hundred years at least went by, and no prophet came. Yet the people did not cease to look for one: they remembered the law of Moses the servant of the Lord, how he had said: 'A prophet shall the Lord your

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God raise up unto thee out of thy brethren, like unto me': that promise had not been fulfilled yet, and they knew it was to be. Many prophets as there had been in Israel since then, there had not arisen any like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face; but one was to come, who was to be like him as none yet had been. They did not know who He would be: it seems from S. John that they were by no means sure whether He would be the same person as the Christ whom later prophets spoke of; but that there was a Prophet to come they all knew and believed.

And there was another Prophet also to come, of whom this latest of the old prophets speaks: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' Not only the Lord Himself should come, the Lord whom the people sought, the Messenger of the Covenant, but before Him a prophet, a preacher of repentance, full of the Spirit of the Lord, yet himself only one of the sons of men. The four hundred years did pass, and Elijah came; not, indeed, as the Jews seem to have expected, Elijah himself descending from heaven, whither he had been carried up alive by the chariot of fire; but one in the spirit and power of Elijah, turning the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And then only a few months passed, and the other Prophet came; a Prophet like, not only to Elijah, but to Moses; yea, greater than Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, for He knew the Lord even as the Lord knew Him. 'No man,' He said, 'knoweth who the Son is but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.'

And so the gift of prophecy was restored, while by the very restoration all the old prophecies began to be fulfilled. Of course, indeed, it was only a beginning. He who was foretold was not only to be a Prophet like unto Moses, but a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, a King meek and lowly. But it is the course of prophecy that we are now speaking of. This found its great perfection and fulfilment in the person of the Lord Jesus, who was, even in His human nature, filled by God with the Spirit, and called to the work of a Prophet, to make God known to men. With Him and after Him there came other prophets. We read in the Book of the Acts, and in S. Paul's epistles, of great numbers of them in the early Church; and a few of these not only taught by spoken words but have left to us, in the books of the New Testament, what they wrote, as well as said, by the Spirit of the Lord. But this outpouring of the gift of prophecy, as it was far more abundant than the old, and told far more of the deep things of God, so, on the other hand, it did not last as long. From Moses to Malachi was one thousand years; to John the Baptist, who was in truth 'the last and greatest of the Old Testa-

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ment prophets, was fifteen hundred ; but from the baptism of Christ to the death of S. John the Evangelist was hardly seventy years. Since then the world has gone on more than one thousand eight hundred years, but no new revelation has come to it : it may, if God so pleases, go on for hundreds of years more ; but, if so, we have to go on with what we have got, not receiving new. Indeed, our possessions are richer than those of the Jews after Malachi. The Lord says to us, not merely, 'Remember the law of Moses My servant,' but, 'Remember the gospel of Jesus My Son.' But our duty is, in kind, the same as theirs was, to remember what we have, to hold fast to it, and let nothing make us forget or renounce it ; and on the other hand, to expect something yet to come, which shall complete it. We do not feel that Malachi's promise concerns not ourselves when he says, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall come suddenly to His temple : ' the Lord whom ye seek has come and gone away, but we look for Him to come again. There is a new revelation of God to come, which shall come, which shall be as much greater than the gospel as the gospel was greater than the law ; only the way to prepare to receive the coming revelation is to keep faithful and loving hold on the old one. 'The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, when all the proud and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it leave them neither root nor branch : but unto them that fear the name of the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings,' that is a prophecy of things unseen, as much to us as it was to the Jews when they first heard the Word of the Lord by the hand of Malachi. I will not say that another coming of Elijah is to be looked for, though there is a prophecy of S. John's that is commonly so understood ; but the coming of the Lord there is no question about. We have to wait for Him, to prepare for Him ; and we know that a great change will come to us all when He appears. But the way to be ready for that change when it comes is to change nothing before. Those that fear the name of the Lord will, when He comes, be saying, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' just as He taught them to say before He went away. The last child that shall be born of a Christian man and wife before all faithful Christians go where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, the last stranger that shall be gathered into the Church before the number of the elect is accomplished, shall be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, just as were the first three thousand Christian converts on the day of Pentecost. Those that are alive, and remaining unto the coming of the Lord, will on the day when He comes still testify the same faith as all the generations did that have fallen asleep, in one God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, and in

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the Holy Ghost. All will go on exactly as it has. Just as unbelievers will say, as we already hear them saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' so the faithful have their answer ready: 'Here is the promise of His coming, even in this, that since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the gospel.' We match the world's unchangeableness by our own. 'The laws of grace shall be just as unchangeable as the laws of nature: 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' While the world remaineth, we will abide in the gospel we have received: he who preaches any other gospel, though he were an apostle or an angel from heaven, shall be held accursed. But yet the gospel is not God's last word, nor the graces of it His last gift or His best. There is something yet to wait for, the knowledge, not of God's Word only, but of God Himself. Until heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law, and far less from the gospel; but heaven and earth shall pass away, and then, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple,' and when He comes His word shall be forgotten in the fulness of His presence.

May that presence to us be what it shall be to those who fear His name, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

W. H. SIMCOX.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

Man's Justification by Christ.

And this is his name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.
JEREMIAH xxiii. 6.



order that you may perceive more accurately the nature and extent of this blessed privilege of imputed righteousness conferred upon you, it is necessary, briefly, to advert to the principal instances in which it is granted to us.

I. The first of these is baptism. In this ceremony the vicarial or substituted righteousness of Christ Himself becomes the grounds of our adoption among the children of grace. That very righteousness alone is the title of our promised inheritance, to which we are then conditionally admitted, and, as it were, sealed and consecrated by the Holy

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Spirit of God : for we are then, in a manner, through the justifying power of Christ's merits, mercifully accepted as our own—born again to the possession of spiritual benefits and privileges, to which, in the state of nature, we had not a single claim to prefer. Thus, in this office of our excellent Church, we thank God, that the child is regenerate, or born again, as soon as it has been the subject of that Sacrament, duly administered ; by which we mean, that through the interposition of the Saviour's atonement, implored for the remission of sins, *i.e.* for deliverance from God's wrath, and through the justifying power of his merits, applied to the human being baptized, he is now, by a second birth, as it were, admitted to the privilege of salvation, upon the terms and conditions prescribed by Christ in His gospel. The breath of another life is then breathed into him. He thereby actually enters on his Christian course, as 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' The spiritual effects of the fall may now, by the operation of God's Holy Spirit, and His own humble endeavours, henceforth be completely surmounted. God will, henceforth, if he keeps his part of the covenant, strengthen him through that Christ, who 'was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'

II. But, secondly, the justifying power of Christ avails us also in repentance ; and especially in that solemn act of penitence, the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. When the 'broken and contrite heart' has poured forth its sorrows to Him, who will thoroughly plead our cause before the Throne of Grace ; when it has unfeignedly abhorred and renounced the sin that had dominion over it, and has implored the mediation of the Redeemer, who has 'borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,' the forgiveness of its transgressions is then immediately vouchsafed, for the worthiness of our intercessor : for the sacrifice once offered by Christ is availing unto every man, till time shall be no more ; provided only his penitence be sincere, *i.e.* provided only his sin be forsaken. By His Cross He reconciles the penitent offender to his God, and, with the sense of pardon, pours into his heart the precious balm of joy and peace unspeakable.

III. But, lastly, the principal occasion of Christ's justificatory office to each of us individually will occur at that awful moment, when we shall stand before the tribunal of God in the day of judgment. At that solemn hour, when the book of life shall be opened before the trembling world, if our humble endeavours in this life shall have been accepted in Christ ; if our efforts to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and to 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, having persevered unto the end,' shall, through the Saviour's merits, procure for us that address, more precious than any sound that ever entered

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mortal ear,—‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!’—then shall we receive the glorious and final justification of the Redeemer.


But the effects of that final justification, what mortal tongue may describe? He who ‘is gone to prepare a place’ for His faithful servants, will then ‘receive them unto Himself, that where He is, there may they be also.’ In that wondrous communion, they ‘shall behold His glory, which the Father hath given Him.’ They shall enter at once upon their inheritance, which shall be for ever; and, with their Saviour’s constant presence and favour, with faculties enlarged and purified, and exalted for such endless enjoyments, and, with the blissful society of angels, archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, they shall never cease to laud and glorify the God of their salvation, by that to us most endearing and transcendent of all appellations, so long before revealed by His prophet; namely, The Lord our Righteousness.

A. B. EVANS.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Sanctity of the Body.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world. S. JOHN vi. 14.

- I.  HE Church must accept the responsibility of duty towards the body. That was recognised in the better days of the Church’s history. Wherever she moved, she learned to care for the bodily life of men. It grew out of Christ’s life; He showed that He cared for the bodies of men. Is there want of physical health? He will restore it. Is there pain? He will alleviate it. Whenever there is need, He will supply it. ‘They need not depart.’ Those hungry multitudes, and those weak forms of men, who gather round Him, need not depart; for the hand of Heaven is stretched out to relieve their wants. And reasonably so, if we reflect upon it; for form is the vehicle of expression of the spirit. Thus it is essential that the body should be cared for. Just as words are valuable to the orator to express his thoughts, so also are our bodies, to give expression to the thoughts and truths of inner life. God has made material things for a set purpose. Our bodies are to manifest life and the light which is within. If the grand idea of human life is that we are to be the expression of the love of God to one another, then this bodily fabric

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we possess is precious as the vehicle of its expression. The maintenance of health and strength is a duty, for when we employ the vehicle which is to give expression to the thoughts of God, can we allow it to be weakened by neglect, and rendered incapable of exercising its proper functions and duties? Our duty to the body means this—the sanctity of the body as the vehicle of the life and mind of God.

II. There is another reason also. We often forget how God has allied the unseen and the seen together. All life is one sphere, but it is a sphere in which one half lies in shadow; the things seen lie in the light of the immediate present, but the other half is shadowed in things unseen and spiritual. These form but one sphere that is moving according to law. Upon my bodily condition depends for good or evil my mental power. The deranged frame means the dull wit and the weak will. Let the bodily fabric be disordered, and power is lost. Can you feel your heart ready of sympathy when you are distracted by pain or agony? What is your judgment worth when you are not in a fit state to make up your mind? We cannot make men spiritual when their physical surroundings are such that they can have no capacity for entering into the glories of unseen things. We must deal practically with three questions, and the duty of doing so our Lord taught when He said, ‘Give ye them to eat.’

III. Our Lord emphasises the practical duty of caring for the bodies of men, but on the other hand He says, ‘This is not everything.’ The care for the needs of men is a solemn duty, but you must not teach men that when they have eaten and drunken, they may die. This is to forget that man is made to give expression to the divine thought. It is to forget that our spirits need the bread of heaven. But our Lord remembered all human needs. He is the Christ who cares for the body. He knows the weariness of mind which results from bodily labour. He knows the state of this poor worn-out frame. We worship no Christ who ignores the condition of our life, but we worship the Christ who, understanding the physical needs of nature, said, ‘They need not depart; give ye them to eat.’ None of us must sink down into an animal existence. We have been created for God, we must hunger after the true bread of life; we must feed upon Him, that we may grow like unto Him. In this struggling life, how we often feel as though we would put our burden down and leave it! But we need not give way; let us rise up again in strong spiritual heroism—gird our loins once more. Is it not well worth while to endure a little longer? Even out of this burden shall be given us the spiritual food that shall make us grow into His likeness, and when we wake up in His likeness, we shall be satisfied that we may rise with Him to His triumphant kingdom.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

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IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

How to please God.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? MICAH vi. 6-8.



ANY and various in all ages have been the answers to that question of the text, but in spirit and principle they reduce themselves to the three, which in these verses are tacitly rejected, that the fourth may be established for all time. And, therefore, this is one of those palmary passages of Holy Writ, which should be engraved on every instructed conscience as indelibly as by a pen of iron upon the living rock. It formulates the best teaching of religion; it corrects the worst errors of superstition. Every book of Scripture, every voice of nature, every judgment of conscience re-echoes and confirms it. Happy will it be for us, if we will use it as a lamp to guide our footsteps, a law to direct our life.

I. The first answer is, Will Levitical sacrifices suffice? 'Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?' that is, 'Shall I do some outward act, or acts, to please God?' Men are ever tempted to believe in this virtue of doing something; to ask, as they often asked our Lord, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And there are times when such external systems may, for ignorant and stiff-necked nations, be a wise safeguard. It was so for the Israelites at the Exodus, depressed and imbruted as they were by long slavery, and saturated with heathen traditions of cruelty and vice. But external observances, without inward holiness, are but the odious whiteness of the sepulchre. 'Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto Me,' saith God to such, 'your sabbaths and calling of assemblies I cannot away with.' Fasting may be necessary, only do not take it for religion; but, on the other hand, look at home; loose the bands of wickedness, your own and others; undo the heavy burdens, your own and others; take the beam out of your own eyes; wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.

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That is dearer in God's eyes than perpetual sacrifice, holier and purer than days of unbroken fast.

II. If then we cannot please God by merely doing, can we by giving? 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil?' Shall we like the Pagans try to bribe God? Shall we make His altars swim with the blood of hecatombs, and fill His sanctuaries with votive gold? Or shall we like terrified sinners, in the Middle Ages, think to buy off His anger by bequeathing our possessions to charity or to the Church? I suppose that while not one of us is so ignorant as not to know the duty of charity, none of us is so exquisitely foolish, as to imagine that he can by gifts win his way one step nearer to the great White Throne. Sacrifices, to bribe Him whose are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? Gold or gems to Him, before whom the whole earth, were it one entire and perfect chrysolite, would be but as an atom in the sunbeam!

III. If then neither by doing, nor by giving, can we please God, what third experiment shall we try? shall it be by suffering? Shall I, lacerating my heart in its tenderest affections, give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? This, too, has been frequently and fearfully attempted; frequently, and fearfully, and more persistently than any other, because in all ages, and in all nations, men have invested God with the attributes of terror and of wrath.

They fled from the society of their fellows to vast wildernesses, or desolate hills, or wave-washed caverns. Knowing their sin, not knowing their Saviour, gazing in remorse and tears at the splendours of Sinai, not coming in humble penitence to the Cross of Calvary—life became to them an intolerable fear. When a man feels that the eye of God is fixed upon him in anger, and he knows not how to escape, then no mountain seems too heavy, no sea too deep, no solitude too undisturbed.

But has any man ever found these sufferings sufficient? Has any man ever testified that he found forgiveness through voluntary torture? Or is not that true which is said of the prophets of Baal, 'They leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner. And it came to pass that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.'

Yet if all these be at the best but unacceptable ways, what is the true way of pleasing God? If not by doing, not by giving, not by suffering, then how? What is the Prophet's answer? By being. 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' God needs not our services; He needs not

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our formulæ; He needs not our gifts; least of all does He need our anguish; but He needs us, our hearts, our lives, our love; He needs it, and even this He gives us; shedding abroad the Spirit of Adoption in our hearts. If we resist not that Spirit, we need no longer be what we are; no longer what we have been. All meanness and malice, all deceitfulness and fraud, all injustice and insolence, all pharisaism and uncharity, all worldliness and lust will fall away from us, and we shall be clothed, as with a wedding garment which Christ shall give, with justice, and humanity, and purity and love. Oh, if we would indeed know how to serve Him aright, let us put away all idle follies and fancies of our own; and seating ourselves humbly at His feet amid those poor and ignorant multitudes who sat listening to Him among the mountain lilies, let us learn the spirit of His own beatitudes: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

DEAN FARRAR.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Character independent of Circumstances.

I tell you that in that night . . . two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. S. LUKE XVII. 34, 36.

- I.  UR Lord, in order to press upon us the great law of our self-determination to help us to be honest with ourselves, to guard us from the temptation of turning the blame of our failure on to circumstances, carries us into the heart of things as they are in a startling fashion. Amid all the apparent outward uniformity of life, underneath the dull grey mass of human life which is apparently neither heroic nor utterly degraded, out of the same ordinary monotonous circumstances the strangest divergencies between man and man, He tells us, are now being formed and are slowly evolving themselves. He holds up to us three typical instances of sudden, sharp and decisive separations which the crisis of His coming will produce. People that look the same now will be seen to be different. The day will declare them. Even now every

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great event in life seems to bring out what men are making themselves into. Sharp appeals evoke character.

Our Lord's own coming was in this sense a separation, a judgment, but it is so presumably with every event that attracts attention, and stirs depths within men. Even in strongest bond of mutual love divisions may be growing daily more dependent, more emphasised by the way in which each meets circumstances. Further and further apart man and wife may grow, while conscious only of a deepened union, life glides on smoothly, nothing evident arises to bring tendencies to a head, and yet underneath absolute diversity is growing day by day, and quite possibly nothing outward may lift up the veil and declare it till that meeting with Christ, which at death or judgment calls out all that is in man and brings his self-determination to a head. And so He tells us how unexpected, how unlooked for will be some of the effects of His coming. I tell you in that night two men shall be in one bed, two enduring the same discipline of sickness or adversity, two crushed under the same calamity, two the victims of some overwhelming sorrow, and the crisis comes, in one it has done its work, on the other it has failed, in the apparent unity of a common woe there is found absolute diversity of character!

II. He goes on to emphasise the same truth: 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left,' *i.e.* two are subjected to the same dull monotonous wearying occupation, sweeping rooms or cleaning stairs, with great capacities chained to teaching elementary things for the bread to live by, two sitting in one workroom at the same dreary tasks, the one shall be taken, the other left. Out of it all one has grown by industry and patience and trust and lifting up of her heart to God, and the other has shrivelled into hard repining and bitter complaining and envious thoughts and hopeless railings at God. Each when looked at so different, yet early and late each went through the same monotonous task. Two men shall be in the field, two, *i.e.* with an active life before them, a life full of occupation, mental and intellectual or bodily and physical. Two men reading for honours in the same school, with the same books, the same temptations to be merely showy and superficial, and the same opportunities of real moral as well as intellectual growth through patient industry and painstaking accuracy; two employers of labour considering their workmen: the one scheming to grind out of them the most work at least wages, and the other with the aim of just and fair dealings always before him, and considering that always and everywhere the Master is among us in the form of a servant; two men preparing for holy orders, the one with the hope of rising to a high place, or to opportunities of self-display, the other with an nearest desire that ever grows that anyhow and anywhere but some-

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how and somewhere the great Master may use him to heal the wounds of His people and to be the humble means of ministering to them His own life. There they are with same temptations, same circumstances, same opportunities, the one shall be taken and the other left. So powerless, so less than nothing are circumstances so impotent to produce a result. Out of the self-same daily round such different results come. So imperious is character, so free from the control of the very circumstances, which are its daily occasions.

Does it not shame us when we complain feebly as we do about circumstances, does it not force upon us that in our dreams of life we must not demand circumstances, but force ourselves to that self-making which shall enable us to be their masters. Is not the real consideration not how I may get out of my surroundings, but how blessed for me if my Lord when He comes shall find me working humbly and patiently in the field where He has placed me, true to Him, and true to His Cross? Then all else is nothing.

CANON EYTON.

Christian Consecration.

Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. ROMANS XIV. 8, 9.

I. **W**HAT does S. Paul's argument imply about New Testament Christianity? That in its very nature it is at once quite full of the powers of the world to come, and quite free from the strange fire of the fanatic. Here is a life whose every inner movement, and therefore its whole outer surface, is to be ruled from its depths by a supernatural relation to a supernatural person. Here is a life, for S. Paul means not an iota less, in which the man is not to entertain an emotion, not to form a thought, without reference to the will of the slain and living Christ who reigns over him supreme. Yet on the other side here is a life in which the same man, not in spite of this supernatural relation, but in direct issue from it, is to throw himself into the intercourse of the common day with a watchful regard for others, and a generous respect for their opinions, and the kindest attention to all their claims. Such a temper is the precise antithesis to that of the fanatic. But it is the characteristic temper of the religion whose other characteristic is that it roots itself wholly in the supernatural, the eternal, the divine; in nothing less than the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and rose and revived from the depth of that great death for us, that He might be the Lord of us dead and living. Such is the Christianity

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of the New Testament ; perfectly supernatural (so it asserts) in its origin and secret ; and perfectly sane, temperate, considerate, in its application of itself to human life.

This phenomenon runs all through the blessed book. The secrets and certainties of heavenly joy and power lie there in congenial neighbourhood with the healthiest precepts of common duty. 'We shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord : study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands.' 'Be ye filled with the Spirit ; filled with all the fulness of God : masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal.' 'Believing in Him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the salvation of your souls : honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.'

Such are the motives of the gospel, drawn from the bright recesses of God, of Christ, of the work of the Holy Ghost, of the hope of glory. Such are the issues of those motives in the day-light sanity, the generous wholesomeness, of gospel morals. In the living harmony of such characteristics lies one of the strongest and most pregnant of the assurances that we who believe have not followed cunningly devised fables, but rest upon the rock. Delusion, illusion, small part had they in the genesis of a gospel, which at once, and by the same act, opened the heaven of heavens to the human soul and called it to throw its energies into the unselfish service of the hour.

But is that rock then solid ? Are these motives genuine ? Is this Jesus Christ of the Cross and the Resurrection at once the supreme fact of history and the way, the truth, and the life, for the needs and experience of the man ? Then let us turn back to the text, and listen with new and definite attention to its account of the essential and innermost relations between Christ and the Christian. How does it run ? 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' And why ? Because just this was the great purpose of our most blessed Redeemer. 'To this end He died and lived again, to this end, that He might be Lord.'

II. You observe the point and scope of the words. S. Paul here does not describe a universal Christian experience ; he does not say that 'we' are all self-devoted to our Master. He insists upon a universal Christian law ; he says that we disciples are all absolutely bound to be thus self-devoted, for we are all purchased to be our Master's property.

It is this law, this constant spiritual fact, that Jesus Christ is the autocratic owner of His followers, and then the resultant of it in His call to them to consent *ex animo* to His possession, to yield

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themselves out and out to the will of God in Christ, that I seek to hold up before you this afternoon. A more familiar tenet in the abstract I could not lay before a Christian assembly. But is it not just one of those truths which mean practically next to nothing while they are entertained as it were in the air and at a distance, but which for many of even convinced and devout Christians need only to be brought home, to be translated into here and now, in order to become discoveries of a new world, revolutions that bring in a new age in the history of the soul? It is one thing to regard our Lord with sincere homage in a large and general sense, holding fast through His mercy all the great treasures of Catholic belief about His glorious Person, resting the burdens of conscience on His sacrifice and intercession, and recognising the duty of at least a tacit and constructive loyalty to Him in the main outlines of life. It is another thing when the man discovers, with an insight perfectly calm and genuine, while yet it is given him from above, that what the Redeemer claims, and annexes, and appropriates, is nothing less than all the being, and all its action. It is a wonderful thing to discover that, not in figures and flights of speech but in sober fact, 'every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' if Christ is to have His due; that the will is to be laid in simplicity at His feet; that all faculties of the mind, and all their growth and all their gains, are to be presented honestly to Him for His far-reaching purposes; that reputation, when and while it is granted, is only a trust for Him; that material possessions are only a trust for Him; that our time is His, all His, morning, noon and night, without interval or vacation; that our tongues are indeed His, in their every word; that 'whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do,' all of it is to be done 'to the glory of God,' in this sense of a reference of the whole of life to Him. 'For whether we live we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord. For to this end He died and lived again.'

III. 'Let us give ourselves up to God,' says holy Fénelon, true practiser of his own preaching, 'without reserve or apprehension of danger. He will love us, and make us to love Him; and that love increasing shall produce in us all the other virtues. He alone shall fill our heart, which the world has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will alter, perhaps, little in our actions, and only correct the motive of them by making them all to be referred to Himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent actions shall become exercises of virtue. Then we shall cheerfully behold death approach as the beginning of life immortal. And we shall then discover the depth of the mercy which God has exercised towards us.' *Illi servire est regnare*; 'Who lives His bondman, he is king.'

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‘And whether we die we die unto the Lord.’ If I read the Apostle’s Greek aright he means that not in death only, *in articulo*, but after death, in the state of the departed, we shall hold unbroken this relation of surrender to Him; the bond servant to the possessing Lord.

‘For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love;
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is written that His servants there
Shall serve Him still.’

Yes; we will not doubt it. This word of the Apostle’s looks altogether that way. And so that prescription of the Old Law about the self-enslaved Hebrew shall be fulfilled in the immortality of the Christian; ‘I will not go out free; then thou shalt pierce his ear, and he shall serve thee, for ever.’

It is a view of death, when death in God’s time comes, full at once of soberest calm and a most vivid happiness, this passing, just as a faithful and willing bondservant, from one mansion to another of the same Lord. ‘Here am I, for thou didst call me!’ A holy awe, but no misgiving tremor, shall mark such a transition, as the Christian goes from the peace of being his Master’s here to the bliss of being his Master’s there; ‘according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.’

H. C. G. MOULE.

The Sunday before Advent.

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. S. MARK i. 14, 15.

THE recurrence of the beginning of the Advent season carrying our minds back to the first appearance of Jesus Christ with its preparation and accompaniments may serve to reawaken our attention to the fact that it is described in the original documents of the Christian Church as being not so much the proclamation of a new doctrine of theology and morals but rather the establishment of a new kingdom, called indifferently the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and the Christ Himself, are both recorded to have commenced their ministry with the same declaration, The kingdom of God is at hand. But yet they are not imagined to be announcing something altogether new and unexpected; they are rather proclaiming the fulfilment of general

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and long-cherished hopes. They are bidding their Jewish hearers observe the orderly development of their national history. The time, the due season, for the manifestation of this kingdom has been fulfilled—the whole history of the people has been leading up to it. Israel had in some imperfect and rudimentary manner been the kingdom of God, ruled by a divine law, practising a ritual of worship implying communion between God and man, holding fast amid all confusions the primary truths of the unity, personality, and spirituality of God; but this kingdom had failed to realise the grand ideal of a perfect Kingdom of God, for it was restricted to one nation and not cosmopolitan; it tended to harden into a formal ceremonial system, crushing out righteousness of conduct and spiritual worship; it was concerned too much with things outward and material. In its chequered history of conflict with foreign nations during the period of the monarchy Israel had been disappointed and vanquished, till, after having lost its own national rulers, it had fallen successively under Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman rule; but still in its worst days of oppression under a foreign yoke, it cherished the expectation of a great deliverer in the person of one whom their Prophets had described as ‘the Son of David.’ In another of their Prophets this expectation had been raised to a yet higher conception of the appearance of ‘a Son of Man’ who was to be put into possession of a kingdom which was both universal and everlasting (Dan. vii. 14). Some hope of restoration survived even in the darkest days. The belief in the coming of some Anointed One, to be at once King and Prophet, was universal, however unworthy may have been the conception of his mission and office.

I. And now at a time of deep depression and in a generation which was destined to see the destruction of Jerusalem, the sacred capital of the nation and the centre of all its religious associations, Jesus begins in the distant provincial towns of Galilee to declare openly that the foreordained season has arrived, and that the Kingdom of God has actually come nigh.

This Kingdom of God was proclaimed by Jesus Christ on His Advent as immediately at hand—its rise was to be expected. Baptism of believing men was appointed as the mode of admission into it, the seal of the new birth into the spiritual world; the Eucharist was the covenant bond of fellowship between the King and His subjects and between the subjects themselves; and these religious ordinances wherever they are observed are signs of the kingdom, for they are plainly observances of what the Founder of the kingdom had commanded for perpetual use. But can we now, after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries from the first Advent of Jesus Christ, say that the grand ideal which the Scriptures of the New Testament set before us

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has been realised? What is the visible manifestation of the triumph of the kingdom? Where is its unity, its universality, its sanctity? Alas! we must confess that there is a wide divergence between the actual and the ideal. Spiritual kingdoms which own a far different king than Christ still sway whole peoples and languages. The kingdom so far as it is manifested in the Church is divided against itself. Eastern, Roman, Anglican Christianity, and vast organisations of religious communities external to all these, divide Christendom. The sole kingship of Christ in His Church has not been duly recognised, attempts have been made to create on earth a visible king of the Church, in the form of Pope, or Czar, or National Ruler; in days of degeneracy the Church has forgotten that she is not of this world, though her mission is in the world, that the weapons of her warfare are not carnal, and has failed to act upon the precepts of her Founder; her rulers have too frequently sought for themselves worldly influence or wealth instead of pursuing disinterestedly the moral and spiritual improvement of those committed to their charge. The immorality of the unregenerate world has found its way into what purports to be the kingdom of righteousness. If we are terribly disappointed at the sad contrast between what is and what might have been, we may find some consolation in the reflection that Jesus Himself never gave men reason to expect the speedy and unopposed triumph of His kingdom. Nay, He even condemned as premature the attempt to separate utterly the evil and the good. It is only at the harvest, *i.e.* the end of this world, that the Son of Man will send forth His angels to gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity. And in the same way the emblem of the net which is used to illustrate the history of the kingdom teaches us to anticipate that it is only at the end of the world that the severance of the wicked from among the righteous will be effected. Why this weary conflict of good and evil even within the pale of the kingdom of righteousness is permitted is a profound mystery which we cannot fathom. It may serve ulterior purposes hidden from our present knowledge. But meanwhile it teaches us lessons, not of despondency, but of patience. We men are apt to hurry on events, God's purposes move slowly through the ages.

II. It may, however, be wise and profitable for us to reflect more steadily, that if it was the declared purpose of Jesus Christ to establish a kingdom, of which His Church was to be in the world the chief organ of manifestation, it ought not to be a matter of indifference to any whether they associate themselves in fellowship with that Church, and endeavour to promote its high and noble ends.

It is a spurious liberality, professing to be wiser than Christ Himself, which holds itself aloof from communion with the great spiritual

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society, and leads men with some affectation of personal superiority to boast of being Christians unattached. If such a profession or Christianity claims to be in accordance with precedents of the New Testament, we repudiate that claim as unsustained by facts. Christ taught a doctrine which we believe on His authority, but He also founded a kingdom, which though in its full completion it is yet invisible, He led us to believe would be visible in a society of men, who were to form the body of which He would ever remain the Head. In the Apostolic days those who gladly received the word of the gospel were instantly without exception received into the society by Christ's own appointed sign, baptism, thereby becoming members of a body, soldiers of a great army, sheep of one flock. They were united in one body, confessing one spirit, one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. In the other great divinely ordained ordinance, the Supper of the Lord, they ate of one bread, and drank of one cup, holding fellowship with their common Lord and Saviour who had given His Body and Blood for their salvation. They joined in a common worship, they provoked one another to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together. Is it not a melancholy declension from such Apostolic precedents, that in our own time and country multitudes of those who profess and call themselves Christians separate themselves so far from their fellow Christians that they never join with them in such high acts of devotion as Holy Communion; that intelligent and educated men and women will allow attendance at some highly ornate musical service on a Sunday afternoon to be almost their sole outward profession of Christianity; that they will adopt language which implies that they are patrons and friends from without of the Church rather than members of that great society by whose laws they ought to govern their conduct, and whose mission in the world ought to be shared by themselves?

III. If the kingdom of God is to vindicate its claim to universality and ultimate triumph, it must aim more earnestly than as yet it has ever done at the permeation of all political and social life with Christian principles of action. We all admit that in the conduct of individual life nothing is more fatal to the true realisation of religion than the divorce between religion and morality: but it is no less disastrous to banish religion from the social life of politics and commerce. The eternal principles of righteousness and unselfishness, which are the distinguishing marks of the Kingdom of God, must govern the relations of nation towards nation, and of governing powers towards all the various classes in each separate political community. The Church, if it is to be the true representative of the kingdom, must bear witness against tyranny and oppression, and an

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aggressive policy of natural aggrandisement. In commercial life the Church must not through cowardice or through adulation of wealth and power forbear to proclaim that the law of Christ demands that we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us. Inculcating love, sympathy, goodness, gentleness, she must endeavour to evoke a true sense of brotherhood in Christ. She will try to understand what is the meaning of the cry for equality, and whilst refusing to be carried away by any specious theory of an absolute equality which is contradicted by all the observed facts of the inequalities of strength and skill and knowledge, she will strive to ascertain what are the conditions of that justice which consists of giving each his due. Some of the leading thinkers of our own age and country have recently been discussing the question whether the absolute truths of political science can be applied without modification to the actual direction of the affairs of life, and are disposed to answer such an inquiry in the negative. Perhaps the Church of Christ may be wise in holding that the laws of Political Economy, which are gained from the isolated observation of one class of phenomena only, must, in their application to such difficult modern problems as that of the proper relation between Capital and Labour, be modified by moral and spiritual consideration of the Christian duty of man towards his fellow-men. The kingdom of God will never reign widely if it should appear that the Church is always on the side of the rich and the strong and the noble.

Is it too much to hope that it may be reserved for the Church of Christ, working from within, to solve the social problem? It should be the duty of each one of us in our own sphere to act in the spirit of our daily prayer to our Heavenly Father, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth.'

W. INCE.

Godly Exercise.

Exercise thyself unto godliness ; for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 TIMOTHY iv. 7, 8.

THE imagery drawn from athletic contests which S. Paul employed so often became fixed in the language of the Christian Church ; but I think with this difference, that S. Paul ordinarily has the foot race in his mind, whereas the early Christian writers are more commonly thinking of pugilistic or even gladiatorial combats. Indeed this comparison was forced on the Christian. For according to the cruel tastes of the time, the spectacle of Christians torn by wild beasts,

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or subjected to other tortures, was commonly presented as an agreeable variety to the monotony of gladiatorial contests. Athletes came to be a recognised term for the martyrs. In more than one early account of a martyrdom, the sufferer's confession, first before the magistrate, afterwards in the arena, is looked on as a single combat, in which Satan, acting through his ministers, the persecutors, strives to beat down his antagonist's constancy, while the Christian hero—or rather Christ, the invincible athlete in whose might he is arrayed—triumphs over his deadly enemy and wins the crown of victory.

I. The training, too, for the conflict with the evil one had an important place in Christian thought, though designated by a name not applied to it in the New Testament, *ἄσκησις*. It was the classical name for the discipline an athlete had to undergo; it had been applied by Philo to the austerities of certain Jewish sects, and possibly it was through him that the word came into Christian use, which begins, as far as I know, with Clement of Alexandria, who was a diligent student of Philo. In the earliest Christian use of the word *ἄσκησις*, nothing requires us to understand it of other than that self-discipline which is the duty of every disciple of our Lord. But soon those only were recognised as *ἀσκηταί*, who practised a severity of discipline not expected from ordinary Christians. When the Decian persecution broke out, a number of Egyptian Christians made their escape into the deserts, where under a mild climate they were able to gain for themselves a frugal sustenance, remote alike from the dangers and the cares of social life. This monastic life retained its popularity after the persecution had ceased; for while, on the one hand, it was an attraction to be able to shake off all the troublesome responsibilities which lie on those who mix with their fellow-men, on the other hand the idea that in retiring from men they drew nigh unto God, and that in ceasing to toil for the things of earth they were securing for themselves a heavenly inheritance, stripped of all its ignobleness what might otherwise have been regarded as a lazy and cowardly running away from duty. The solitary life came to be even accepted as the higher one, and they who practised it to be called in the pre-eminent sense *ἀσκηταί*.

II. In this as in other instances, the separation from ordinary Christians of a class supposed to be aiming at especial sanctity had the effect of depressing the general standard. *Askesis* came to be regarded as a thing to be expected from none but monks; and the words ascetic and asceticism have considerably changed their meaning. Even in the Roman Catholic Church what we now call asceticism is regarded as an object rather of admiration than of imitation; and among Protestants it has fallen into such disrepute that if it could be

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reported of a preacher that he was inculcating asceticism, he would be apt to be set down as ignorant of the gospel.

Yet you will not require me to take pains to prove to you that S. Paul's exhortation to his youthful disciple to train and discipline himself unto godliness has not lost its applicability now that days of persecution are over, now that we are not likely to be called on in any such sense as he to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. When we examine closely the language of the Apostles and inquire what was it that rendered necessary so much toil and so much vigilance as they demanded from their converts, we find that those causes held a very subordinate place, which are peculiar to that age; that comparatively little room is taken up with exhortations to that self-denial which is to be exercised in enduring external persecution, but far more to that self-denial which is still demanded of us, the denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and the mortifying the works of our earthly members. Even those passages where we should expect to find the enduring of persecution exclusively treated of, turn out to contain exhortations adapted to every period of the Church's history. When, for example, S. Peter commences an exhortation with the words, 'Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind,' we should anticipate that the constancy which he recommends to his readers had reference exclusively to those trials which are only met with in the time of the Church's adversity; but as we read on we find that the firmness on which he insists was to be displayed not so much in bearing the insults as in avoiding the vices of the Gentiles. 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot.' You see then that the objects to which the training of the apostolic age was directed are not essentially different from those which must be aimed at still.

III. In speaking of training, something must be said about abstinence, which has always been recognised as an essential part of the trainer's discipline. That you should abstain from unlawful pleasures is a point on which I need not insist; since it is one on which you do not need to be taught to know your duty. But it comes under the general topic of the importance of cultivating our faculties by exercise; that you should in this way maintain the authority of your conscience by preserving its sensitiveness and promptly obeying its dictates. Any one who has used an alarum clock to wake him, knows

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that if after it has roused him he turns to sleep again, after a couple of days it will wake him no longer. In like manner conscience, if disregarded, will cease to warn, while its rightful rule over the lower parts of our nature is speedily lost if they are permitted to triumph over her.

But the case is less plain when the question is concerning abstinence from lawful pleasures. About the time of the foundation of the Christian Church there came from the East a great wave of ascetic teaching. The doctrine was, that matter was the source of all evil, and that man's great object ought to be to obtain release from its dominion; that the body was thus the enemy of the soul, and the depression of the body the thing to be aimed at in self-cultivation. To live without food being impossible, at least as little as possible ought to be taken. Flesh-meat was forbidden; so also was wine and marriage. Such teaching had already made itself heard in S. Paul's time. He had to protest against those whose watchword was, Touch not, taste not, handle not. Before the end of his career he had to contend with those who had forbid to marry and commanded to abstain from meats, against whom he laid down the principle that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. But notwithstanding the Apostle's resistance, the doctrine grew, and had wide prevalence in the Gnostic sects, which were among the most formidable of the Church's enemies in the second century. Accordingly in an early canon which dealt with the subject of abstinence, it was sanctioned if practised δι' ἄσκησιν οὐ διὰ βδελυρίαν; that is to say, if a man abstained for the sake of discipline, but not because he abominated the things themselves. But it is remarkable how in every controversy men are apt to imbibe a certain amount of their opponents' principles, admitting some of the most plausible of their assertions and only singling out for attack those the falsity of which they think themselves best able to expose. Thus in the present case, though it was denied that the abstinence inculcated by the Gnostics was a duty or necessity for all Christians, it was commonly recognised as a higher kind of life, and the depression of the body was regarded as an advance towards Christian perfection. The vegetarian was imagined to be living a higher life and to be a better Christian than the flesh-eater, the celibate than the married man. I do not think it necessary now to teach you that body and soul are not enemies but intimate allies, and that neither can suffer without injury to the other. To do anything inconsistent with keeping the body in a state of perfect health and efficiency is not only no Christian duty, but is a breach of the trust committed to us. This, however, being fully conceded, it must also be owned that in our

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modern life, with regard to matters of food and drink, excess prejudicial to health of body as well as of mind is the extreme into which men are most likely to fall ; and that the opposite side is the one in leaning to which men are least likely to fall into hurtful errors.

The ordinary history of victory over temptation is that it is obtained less by direct contest with it than by a rush of thoughts carrying the mind another way. In direct contest we resist an allurements to unlawful pleasures ; but the allurements presents itself again, and if, perhaps, we resist again, yet again the allurements is presented, and at length we fall. But the case is otherwise if a longing for higher and better pleasures has been excited, in view of which the meaner lose their power to tempt us. The early apologists for our religion were able to boast with truth that under its teaching the lascivious man had become chaste, the knave had become honest. Was it Christ's moral teaching, excellent as it was, that made that change ? Nay, how should distant nations have become acquainted with that teaching ? What sent forth into the world the apostolic missionaries, counting nothing of toil or persecution, cold or nakedness, peril or the sword ? What still induces men to forsake the ease and comfort of civilised life, in order to make known to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ ? Not conviction of the excellence of the lessons of a wise teacher, but personal love to Him who died to redeem us. And still there is no greater instrument for holy living than those emotions which rise in us when we call to mind the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Christ in dying for us ; for the love of Christ constraineth us that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

G. SALMON.

Yesterday, To-day, and for Ever.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. HEBREWS xiii. 8.

AS these words stand in our Bible, their connection is not clear. The author is urging upon his readers that they should have in remembrance those who had preached the gospel to them, and should follow their faith. 'Remember them which . . . have spoken unto you the Word of God ; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.' Then, without any grammatical connection, come the words of my text, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' And then, an exhortation that they should not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, that their hearts should be established with grace.

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The authors of the Revised Version have laid the English reader under an obligation, by making clear what before was somewhat confused. 'Remember them which . . . spake unto you the word of God; and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever. Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings.'

I. The words, 'yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' were no doubt used by the author of the epistle in the proverbial sense at that time given to them. They declared that from the ages to the ages Christ changeth not, that from eternity to eternity Jesus Christ is the same. But they may serve also to throw us back in mind to the time at which they were written, a time when in one sense they were literally and vividly true; when so far as the Christian knowledge of Christ was concerned, the whole of the Christian past was but as yesterday.

We find it difficult to realise with any fulness the conditions of Christian life in those days, and the advantage and disadvantage to the Christian preacher and the Christian convert of the recent character of the events on which the one based his teaching, the other his conviction. The Christian of those days would have found it much more difficult to forecast the Christian faith and practice, the Christian difficulties and the Christian advantages of a time eighteen hundred years after him, when events, vividly fresh to him, should have become matters of far-off history. At the natural creation germs were sown which have developed according to the laws imposed upon them, and have produced the marvels that surround us. The revelation of Christ planted a spiritual germ, the developments of which have been manifold, bewildering in the diversity of their character. As the spirit is vastly freer than the body, so the spiritual germ expands to all appearance unfettered, free, so far as we can see, from everything resembling the stringent laws which govern the growth of the natural organism. My text speaks of 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;' but while Jesus Christ remains the same for ever, man's ideas of Jesus Christ have varied greatly, and vary greatly still. To different ages Jesus Christ has been different; different in power, in operation, in nature; to different men, nay, to the same man at different stages of the man's development; He is different still. But all the time, while men have been forming feeble and varying conceptions of Him, He has been the same. What age has been least feeble and least wide of the truth in its conception of that which is inconceivable, what men or what school of the present age are most near to the truth, it is beyond the power of man to know.

It would be an interesting occupation to consider the effect of the gospel message eighteen hundred years ago and now upon men of

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various temperaments; how far the man of sceptical mind is more or less likely now, than then, to receive what we believe to be the truth; with what greater or less persuasiveness the careless man is appealed to now; whether the proud, self-confident nature is brought with less difficulty to bow the knee to Christ; whether, in short, the saving force of the gospel has become decidedly greater or less, when brought to bear upon the conversion of one individual soul. It would be a complicated question, for while we have gained so much in some respects, we have lost much in others. One point would certainly be brought out bright and clear, that whatever else has changed, however different in form the appeal may be, however great the advantage of the general profession of Christianity, however great the advantage of much that has overlaid the simplicity and purity of the faith once delivered to the saints, there is in the foundation itself, in the vital essence, no change whatever. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

II. But while we speak of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, we have to bear in mind the endless diversities of temperament which mark and have marked the nations and the men to whom Christ has come. The early teacher who, like S. Paul, had knowledge of the difficulties of the gospel, among different classes and different kinds of men, saw that it was necessary to make himself all things to all men, that he might save some. As he passed from men of a low type of civilisation to those of higher and higher developments, he would see, if his eye were keen, something the same differences of reception, and comprehension, and outward effect, that the historian sees, when he traces the Christian germ from his pagan ancestor through the centuries of continual change down to himself and his generation; much as the traveller descending to the plain from the heights of the Himalayas or the Andes observes almost the same changes in vegetation which we would see in a journey from the pole to the equator. The differences which we see and deplore among Christians of the same sorts or different countries, the changes in profession, in practice, which we mark in the Christian history of a nation, resolve themselves into this, that as S. Paul made himself all things to all men, so all men make to themselves all things of the story of Christ. We are naturally inclined to view with some impatience those who differ from us on matters of such vast importance as the Christian verities; but our experience of ordinary life can show us an abundance of cases where men, equally honest in purpose, draw conclusions opposite in character from facts which both allow. We are inclined to blame our forefathers at times for their superstition, at times for their violence in matters of religion, but, I think, we often blame them unjustly. They were apprehending after their fashion,

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and with such power as they possessed, those same verities which we ourselves can only apprehend as we are, not as others will be a hundred years hence. A like consideration, honestly applied to our own contemporaries, would tend to the development of a larger meed of Christian charity.

It is one of the most powerful of the incidental arguments for Christianity, that it has gone through almost every possible phase, and yet we may fairly claim that it is possessed of greater vitality at this present time than it ever possessed before. It has been all things to all men, and yet it has not changed. It has decked itself in splendour, and has fitted itself to the cabin of the slave. It has filled the whole soul of the man of mighty intellect, and has satisfied the mind of low degree. It has fired the hearts of martial kings to great resolves, and has guided the nameless poor to humble deeds of mercy and love. The whole of our science of theology has grown out of it, a science second to none in difficulty and grandeur, and yet the very fulness of its blessing and its power has been poured upon those to whom theology is an empty name. It has for each the message which each needs, and how diverse are those messages in their form and in their operation; but how surely is it the same spirit which worketh all in all. We speak of the changes through which Christianity has passed, but they are chiefly changes of garb. There have been times no doubt of dark and prevailing ignorance, but even in the darkest times there have been those who possessed the one true knowledge, the love of God which passeth knowledge. There have been times of gross superstition, but the times were worse when Jehovah was still able to say, 'I have left me seven thousand men in Israel.' The spirit of the age gives in each age the outward shape which Christianity bears, and with the changing spirit of the age the outward shape has changed. It is one of the most interesting studies in the history of the Church of Christ in any country, to notice this ebb and flow on the surface of the great deep. It is one of the most instructive and educating studies to observe how one age has failed to sympathise with another in outward things; has been unable to enter into its feelings, or even to do justice to them. This feature has been prominent of late, when many practices for some time obsolete have been renewed. To take a significant example from the history of our own Church, we find one age ordering that the careless disregard of decency which has allowed wooden tables to be used in church, for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, shall be quite done away, and only stone altars shall be allowed. We know well how we have found another age declaring that an altar of stone may not be placed in a church, and only a table made of wood can be allowed. Or, to pass to less controversial times, we find one age breathing forth its ideas

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of the peacefulness and plenty of the tree of life, by carving up the shaft of the Cross exquisite scrolls, wherein birds and four-footed beasts find food and shelter. We find the next age adapting the same design to the tangled maze of the thicket, where men and even satyrs slaughter the inhabitants of the forest with their spear and with their bow.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. I began by saying how impossible it would have been for a Christian of the earliest age to forecast the Christian faith and practice of a time later by eighteen hundred years than his. How many terms of the infinite series, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, have passed since his time, and there remains a for ever as long, though we be so far from the beginning and have so fateful a past. Generations have come and gone. We are ourselves going as fast as time can fly. We are hurrying to our entry upon the real for ever, and our one hope, our one assurance, is that He changeth not. Only in that hope, only with that confidence, can we dare pass forth into an eternity not more wide than His power to save, not more endless than His love.

CANON BROWNE.

V. ILLUSTRATIONS

Redemption. It cost God more to redeem the word than to make it.
JER. xxiii. 5-10. He that made me with a word speaking, when He redeemed me, spake, and wept, and bled, and died to do it. What can I think too much to endure for His sake, that was made a curse for mine?

GOD 'repented that He made man,' but never that He redeemed him.

Salvation. If I offer you money, you do not say to me, 'I will come to-morrow.' No, you demand it at once. No one delays, no one makes excuses. The salvation of the soul is offered, and no one hurries himself.

CHRIST was infinitely more concerned for our eternal salvation than for His own temporal preservation. Had He been rescued by the power of angels, we had fallen a prey to the paw of devils.

*Salvation
a Present
Blessing.*

JOB ii. 7.
520

THE saints are not only blessed when they are comprehensors, but while they are viators. Job on the dunghill was blessed Job.


Holy Days.

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL

The Prospect of Suffering an Incentive to Christ's Service.

I will show him how many things he must suffer for My Name's sake.

Acts ix. 16.

I.  HE prospect of suffering, set forth not as the condition only, but as the attraction of a life's career. The words, I know, are startling. We are from the outset in the domain of paradox. We are assuming what experience, or what is too hastily called experience, the experience of the average, seems to deny. We are going in the teeth of not a few established maxims. If we ever try to sketch out a career either for a friend or for ourselves, in what colours do we fill it in? Are they not, to put the matter briefly, the colours of success? And is it not taken for granted that success means happiness? We think we see the bent of our friend's gifts and the peculiarity of his temperament all pointing in one direction. In that direction all our hopes and plans for him shall follow. There we see favouring circumstance, rapid advance, universal sympathy and applause. So far as we can influence his choice, this prospect is part of our argument. We say to him, This is what you seem made for. Do this, and you will succeed.

There is here clearly no paradox. We are on the beaten path of approved experience. If it be the path of commonplace, is it not

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the path of common sense also? I will not stop to inquire how much of real truth and sober wisdom there may be in such counsels. I would rather suggest to you that, as long as we keep within the atmosphere which surrounds them, we scarcely seem to breathe the atmosphere of the gospels. The spirit of the gospels is heroic, or it is nothing. Just as the Master said of old, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,' so we seem to hear Him say of all such counsels of imperfection, 'Except your incentives to a life's career shall be nobler than the incentives popularly accepted as sufficient, ye have yet to learn the meaning of My service. I do not say to My servants, Give me your hearts, and ye shall be famous and successful and happy, but, Give Me your hearts, map out your lives along the lines that I shall trace for you; be ready to bear My Name and carry out My principles in whatever path I may set before you, and then, as My highest mark of favour I will show you how many things ye must suffer for that Name's sake.'

Again we say, it is the language of paradox, but then is it not the language of Christ?

II. I would say to each man who is able to receive the message, Stir up the gifts of God. Recall into life and light every consciousness ever granted you that you were able, and therefore bound, to contend for Christ's cause. But, having spoken of contending—a thought which sometimes stirs the pride within us, as well as the passion of loyalty—I would leave you with that other thought on which we have chiefly dwelt to-day. If I might presume to guide a single prayer of any young man who hears me—a single communing between himself and his God—I would counsel him to ask just this: 'O Lord, who knowest all things, prepare me for suffering. Make me strong to suffer, if it be Thy will, and to help others to suffer. Show me something of the mystery of Thine agony and Thy life-long Cross, and in Thine own time make me—even me—perfect through suffering.'

H. M. BUTLER.

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S. BARNABAS

The Inexpedience of Expediency.

Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? ACTS xiv. 14, 15.



BARNABAS, whose name signifies the Son of Consolation, is continually brought before us as a character of great tenderness and sympathy. He is described indeed as a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and we know that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are manifold, and implant and produce every ray of goodness and beauty that makes up the clear light of the divine character. But among all the gifts, gentle love seems to have distinguished S. Barnabas. His conduct to Saul after his conversion, his ministry to the sufferers at Antioch, the part he took in the quarrel with S. Paul about S. John Mark, all these illustrate the tenderness of his disposition. That this degenerated into a fault is evident from S. Paul's language in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he blames S. Barnabas for giving way to the pressure of popular religious opinion at Antioch, and following S. Peter in a dissimulation that was to please a certain section of the Jewish Christians.

In these ways this great Apostle represented both in its beauty and its weakness a phase of character which is very highly esteemed at the present day in the religious world. It is a character which is very winning in its amiability and ready sympathy; but which sinks into something very like indifference or dishonesty rather than face the unpleasantness of putting disagreeable truths forward, and acting consistently on them.

On this very account it seems all the more profitable and interesting that on this day, when we would honour the memory of this great Apostle and thank God for His martyrdom, we should dwell for a little while on an occurrence where Christian courage and firmness were conspicuously displayed by this gentle Saint.

I. At the present day there are a great many people whose motto is 'Expediency.' They are a numerous class, and with many subdivisions. Some are indolent, and their favourite application of their doctrine is 'Let well alone,' or 'Things have done well enough for

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the last two hundred years, why bring them up to unsettle men's minds and cause divisions now?' Others are more active. They recognise the existence of many evils, and they wish to deal with them, but at the same time they do not wish to give offence. They value a character for gentleness, they say truly that love is the greatest of all qualities, but they add untruly that love precludes definiteness, sternness, severity.

Against these, S. Barnabas the gentle in to-day's lesson offers a striking testimony. After healing the lame man, he and S. Paul were to be worshipped as gods by the populace. They refused the homage; they rejected it with horror. Of course they did, we are told; how could they do otherwise? How could they commit such a sin against God, against the very principle they were come to teach, as to accept it? How indeed, except on the principle of expediency? How much they might have gained by accepting it. How, on the principle of seeing good in things evil, they might have recognised in the shout 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men,' a glimmering idea of the Incarnation; by joining themselves on this broad platform, how they might have conciliated a hearing for the great Christian doctrine. Then again by keeping the people in good humour, how great an influence they might have retained over them, and led them to a willing and pleasant intercourse, nay, even more directly, what influence they might have held over them, and ordered them to receive the new doctrines and practise the new rites of worship. And how easy to argue that there was no sin when they themselves inwardly rejected the worship, or pleaded that it was only accepted by them representatively for the God whom they served. How easy, in fact, to argue that to do a great right, they might do a little wrong, and without any surrender of the truth in their own hearts might ally themselves with the people, and in the bond of universal brotherhood lead them by means of their own errors to the knowledge and the practice of the truth. The temptation was just to accept for the moment a little offering of homage, and in so doing to win the whole city to their way of thinking.

II. What should be our answer when the strife of tongues is fierce; when the glare of infidelity fixes its glance of hate upon the Cross; when friends seem few, and the faith is assaulted, and men's hearts wax cold in love, and the voice of popular opinion speaks of universal brotherhood at the expense of the Fatherhood of God, or of general agreement on condition of renouncing everything that is positive enough to make a bulwark or a bond; when we are told we dare not speak of orthodoxy, and that truth is exactly what every one of the millions of men chooses to think it is; when, on the other hand, we are wooed softly to surrender and to retain our popularity at the

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expense of our principles ; when we are told that we shall win more souls by surrendering disputed points ; or when within ourselves our own weakness begs us not to forfeit our character for liberality and good nature, not to put before our people, if we are priests, doctrines which are unpalatable, and not to practise, if we are laymen, observances which provoke scorn or dislike, when the temptation is to surrender a little truth that we may gain a great deal in the eyes of men—what must our answer be ? 'The answer in effect of Barnabas and Paul at Lystra, the answer of our Lord in the wilderness, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' This answer involves the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled ; it is compatible with love for the souls of men that stops not short of dying for them. This answer against tremendous odds was made in the strength of the Spirit, perhaps under the encouragement of the lion-hearted S. Paul, by the gentle Barnabas ; it was made by Christ in the day of His humanity ; it may be made by any one, however weak, if made in reliance upon Christ ; just with the same difficulty, just with the same force, as it was made by any one of the noble army of martyrs, by evangelists, Apostle or prophet whose memories are honoured by the Church below, and whose souls are in the safe keeping of God, all of whom we in our weakness may remember that it was written that they too 'out of weakness were made strong.'

G. C. HARRIS.

S. JOHN BAPTIST

Spiritual Unselfishness.

Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist : but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. S. LUKE vii. 28.

I. E have not the power to love God so utterly without thought of self as S. John Baptist did. We know that if we believe and love Him we have all the blessedness of His Kingdom. God does not call us to renounce these blessings, and therefore it would not be right for us to forget them. Yet there is a lesson for us in the grace of this free, generous, unselfish love which God gave to S. John : for how can it become us, who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, to love Jesus less than he did, who was left outside it ? To love our Lord and Saviour, not only for what He does for us, not

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only for the blessings He gives to us, but simply for being the God He is, for doing the glorious works He does, by such love the least in the Kingdom of Heaven may become a little less unworthy to be blessed with a blessing above that of the Holy Baptist. He was not the Christ, but was sent before Him; but we do not merely come after Christ as His followers, but are a part of Him, 'members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.' Thus it is, that we have a higher call than even this most excellent among the Saints: we have a less laborious work to do, and a higher reward for doing it.

II. Much more is it true of us later Christians which the Lord said even to the Apostles at the first: 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured, and ye entered into their labours.' Our spiritual nearness to Jesus is a more precious thing than John's ministerial authority over Him, which he was almost afraid to take, when he baptized Him in the river of Jordan; more precious, even, than his sacrifice of his life for the righteousness of God's law. To have read all the glorious words of faith and love toward Jesus which were uttered by S. John, of which we read most in his namesake's gospel, all the yet more glorious works which we read of his having found grace to do, all these sound as so many reproaches to us, who have received so much more grace, been so much more favoured by our Lord, and yet have so much less to show for it. If we trusted in ourselves, in our own faithfulness to grace and worthiness, we might well despair: how should creatures like us expect to enter into the Kingdom of God, when such a man is less than the least in it? But we know that the source of our salvation is not in ourselves, that it is Christ who prepares for every man his place, whether here or in a better world. To us on earth He has given the best place, a place inside His kingdom: to S. John He gave only the best place outside it. But to all, both us and him, He will, we trust, accord a place in His kingdom that is to come, higher no doubt to him, in proportion, not only as his faith and love were greater, but as his place on earth was lower, and the favour he received less; but we all, if we abide in faith and love, shall be partakers in the kingdom with Him and with all the elect.


W. H. SIMCOX.

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S. PETER

S. Peter's Denial.

And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all. S. MARK xiv. 27-31.

I. T is for our learning, no doubt, that it is written that 'all the disciples forsook Him, and fled,' and that Peter denied Him thrice in one night ; but the way for us to learn the lesson God's Spirit intends is not to talk of these as great and heartless sins, things that we should never do the like of. It will be more profitable to consider them as very natural infirmities, just what we should naturally do ourselves, unless God gave us special grace ; too often, indeed, things just like what we actually have done. For, while I speak of the disciples who forsook or denied the Lord among those who added to His sufferings, we must remember that, directly and actively, they did Him no harm at all—only failed to give Him the comfort, or at most the help, that their presence and sympathy might have given. The first time that they failed Him, when, during His Agony, Peter and James and John went to sleep for sorrow, instead of watching with Him, He showed that He understood how it was ; He said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Now we are all (all of us at least who are familiar enough with the words of the gospel to be able to use them at all), we all, I say, are in the habit of using these words as an excuse for any weakness of our own ; we say it is only the flesh that is weak, and that the spirit is willing ; and we think that that is enough to excuse us. This is not, indeed, how our Lord meant and used the words ; for He said at the same time, 'Rise, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' The weakness of the flesh is not an excuse for yielding to it, but is only a temptation that ought to be guarded against by watching and prayer ; still, the disciples only yielded to a temptation that we commonly yield to, one that we see no harm in yielding to.

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And so again when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, we may say that they ought not to have done so, that they would have shown more love to the Lord if they had not. From the way that He speaks in the text of their being offended, or, as S. John reports the same or a like saying, 'Ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone,' it is plain that He would rather have had them stay with Him, follow Him to the judgment, and stand by Him there. In one way we may conceive that they could have done Him real service if they had; when 'the High Priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine,' if some of His disciples had boldly come forward to bear witness to His doctrine, to prove how righteous it was, and in agreement with God's law, it would have made it harder to give judgment against the Lord, seeing that, even as it was, the council found it hard to get any evidence on which they could condemn Him with any show of justice or legality. But, whether He wanted the support of their testimony or only of their sympathy, He Himself at last gave them leave to go away; He said to the officers, 'If ye seek Me, let these go their way.' He knew that there would be a real danger, if they followed Him, of their having to go with Him to prison, if not to death; when one did offer to follow Him, S. Mark and S. Luke tell us 'the young men laid hold on him,' and we should surely have said that he at least had plenty of excuse for fleeing. The Lord knew, at any rate, that to go with Him to His trial would be a risk greater than their faith was yet able to bear; so in order that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, 'Of them that Thou gavest Me I have lost none,' He asked that they should be allowed to go away; and go away they did.

II. All left Him for the moment; but two of the eleven soon took courage, and did follow Him after all. Whether or no S. John was (as has been guessed) the young man in the linen cloth who tried to follow Jesus at first, he certainly did follow Him afterwards, 'and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High priest.' Perhaps, seeing that 'that disciple was known unto the High Priest,' he ran less risk than the rest; but he did not hide that he was one of Jesus' disciples—probably indeed all the servants knew it—for, as all the gospels tell us, the question put to S. Peter was, 'Art not thou also one of them?' thou also, as well as John? Peter, though he too had taken courage and followed Jesus, now, when he was asked that question, denied it; and we profess to be greatly shocked at his denial, at his failure in love to his Master. Yet, if we look only for ordinary human love and faithfulness and devotion on the disciples' part, dare we say that such a denial proved failure in these? I will not say how far S. Peter was weakened and made afraid because he

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had put himself in the wrong by drawing his sword on the High Priest's servant, resisting a lawful arrest, which might and ought to have been followed by a fair trial and a just acquittal; but it is certain that S. Peter, whether through his own fault or the fault of the judges, was in real danger, if he had been known for Jesus' disciple. There have been other men, since our Lord, who have been put to death, not for evil deeds but for good; not to instance the case of Christ's own martyrs, we may name the Marquis of Montrose in our own history; or Andrew Hoffer, who was shot by Napoleon; or old John Brown of Harper's Ferry in our own youth. All these were condemned to death for deeds that they thought honourable, and which posterity honours; all these had, as they deserved, loyal and devoted comrades. Now if one of these comrades of theirs had followed his leader to the judgment hall, to see the end—perhaps with some vague hope of a rescue; if he was recognised in the crowd by his rough Highland accent, and asked, 'Art not thou also one of them?' should we think it very shocking, or that it proved he had no love to his Captain, if he said, 'I do not know the man'?

III. If we will be Jesus's disciples we must learn really, and not only in profession to love Him above and before everything, to allow nothing to interfere with His service, nothing to draw us aside from our duty to Him. And let us remember that we have more done for us than had been yet done for the Apostles when they were blamed for forsaking the Lord. He had not yet died to atone for their sins of nature. He had not yet sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen and embolden them in His service. After He had done these things for them they never failed again as they did now. Within a few weeks or months, Peter and John first, and then all the Apostles, did follow Jesus to prison, and there was talk even of putting them to death; within a few years, James the brother of John first, and then almost all the others, did die for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now, we have been redeemed, as they were, from the power of sin; we have received, as they did, the Spirit of Righteousness. We have then no excuse if we show in our lives a weakness sinking below their weakness; we ought to be like them—like, if not equal to them—in their new, vigorous, spiritual life. It is not indeed necessary—it is not, we may say, possible—that we should have grace equal to that given to the Apostles; but we are not tried as they were. It is necessary that we shall be as faithful, as devoted to our Lord as they were; that we shall resist our petty every-day temptations, which are all that God in His mercy allows to attack us, as resolutely as they met their sore trials and persecutions, and that we shall overcome them as completely. To serve Christ consistently, when the flesh is

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weak, not to take that as an excuse, but to strengthen the weak flesh by watching and prayer; and again, to confess Christ openly, not to go out of our way to tell the world that we are His servants, but never to shrink from its being found out—never, at any rate, to fail in doing our duty for fear that the world may possibly find out what we do and why we do it—this is absolutely necessary, if we are to be true disciples of Christ. This, I repeat, His Apostles did, from the time that they were redeemed and inspired by Christ; and we, for whom the same Blood has been shed, to whom the same Spirit is given—we also are called to do the same. W. H. SIMCOX.

FEAST OF S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

The Ministry of Angels.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently send Me more than twelve legions of angels? S. MATTHEW xxvi. 53.



It may be well for us to make sure in our minds that we do believe in the existence of angels. We cannot see them, yet we believe that they are. We do not think of angels as though they were fairies, or some mere outcome of the poet's imagination, but we believe in the existence of angels because the Bible tells us of them. And therefore it is well for us just to remind ourselves how impossible it is to tear the belief in angels out of the Bible. You must tear your Bible to pieces if you wish to get rid of the teaching of the existence of angels. For you will find the angel mentioned from beginning to end throughout the whole of the sacred volume. You remember how in the first book, Genesis, we read after the fall of Adam and Eve, that God placed the cherubim with the flaming sword to guard the access to the tree of life. In the very first book, in the beginning of the first book, the existence of angels is mentioned; and all down the different books till you come to the last book, the Revelation of S. John. There you hear plainly what the divine seer said. 'I heard,' he says, 'the voice of many angels round about the throne: the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' And so again we know, if we wanted to make it even doubly sure that it is not a fanciful gathering from different parts of the Bible. The Divine Master Himself again and again speaks to us of the angels; again and again He tells us in His teaching, sometimes

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in parable, sometimes in plain statement, sometimes prophetically: He tells us of the existence of holy angels; and tells us that when He comes again He will not come like a little child to be born and laid in the manger of Bethlehem; but when He comes again to judgment He will come, and all the holy angels with Him.

The Saviour again and again gives us to understand that there exist these invisible holy beings. And so the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks very plainly of it as part of the greatness of the Christian's inheritance, that 'we are come to an innumerable company of angels.' They are called by different names, angels or archangels, principalities, dominions, authority, power, thrones, cherubim and seraphim, now in one name, now in another, it may be to signify to us different degrees and power. But the fact remains, without any ground for questioning, that if we believe the Bible, we believe in the existence of holy angels.

When we go out at night and look up to the stars, and see them in their innumerable brightness, they might remind us of the innumerable company of angels, and it would be well for us if from time to time we renewed our faith.

But then, assuming that you, as believers in the Scriptures, believe also with me in the existence of angels, what are some of the practical lessons that we ought to gather from the revealed fact? The Saviour Himself has given us three or four very plain lessons.

I. First, perhaps, I might say, He would have us think of the angels as giving us an example of perfect obedience. In the prayer which He has given us to say every day, the Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' and 'Give us this day our daily bread,' as He would have us say it every day, so every day He would have us think of the angels when He says, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That will is done in heaven, in part, by the holy angels; perfectly they do it, and the Saviour has the will to place their example in the prayer which every Christian man and woman and child should say with all their heart every day. We have, then, there in the prayer the thought reminding us of the angels. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' As the angels do that will most perfectly, as the will of God is to them a law which not one transgresses, so should we set it before ourselves as the model of our lives. As the holy angels do that will in perfection in heaven, so should we strive to do it on earth.

II. One other lesson the Saviour has given us, that the angels do not make any account of the wealth of this world, or of the rank and the pomp in estimating those whom they will take care of. They do not want money for their trouble. You know what I mean, the parable of Dives and Lazarus. The Saviour there tells us of a rich

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man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a poor man, a beggar, who lay at his door, so full of sores that the dogs even came and licked them, and nobody took notice. When the rich man died he had a funeral, he was buried. When the beggar died we are not told that he had any kind of funeral, or any notice taken of him; but the Saviour does tell us that the angels took that soul into Abraham's bosom. Surely when we think of that, the thought of the angels and the angels' work does leave a precious and a practical conclusion for us. When we are estimating what is great and what is noble, do we determine it by the wealth, and by the rank, and by the power of this world, or have we made up our minds unalterably to a quiet and meek spirit; those are the ornaments which make a soul precious in the sight of God? A quiet and meek spirit. Gentleness, meekness, quietness, humility, purity, these are the ornaments, these are the jewels that the angels look for, these are the things which are precious in their sight. Surely when we renew, as to-day, our belief in the angels, we should examine ourselves and ask whether we have been led astray by all the glittering gaud of this world's modern wealth, or whether we honestly do value men, not in the way of patronising them, but in the way of real admiration and brotherly love, if he be a man of good life, a Christ-like, loving man, though he be as poor as Lazarus. That is the doctrine of the example of the angels.

III. There is another practical lesson, which we can gather, that our Lord has given us. He has told us in those words of His that we know so well, that 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' You know the occasion of His saying that. He had told the little parable of the lost sheep. If a man had a hundred sheep and lose one of them, he will leave the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost until he find it. And when he finds it, then he will put it upon his shoulders and carry it back rejoicing, and he will gather his friends and his neighbours together and say, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' 'So,' says the Saviour, 'there is joy in heaven, amongst the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.' Or, the Saviour again, to make it clear, and drive it home to them, What woman shall have ten pieces of silver and she lose one, will not light a candle, and sweep the house, and look diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, then she calleth her friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which was lost.' 'So,' says the Saviour, 'there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.'

BISHOP KING.

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ALL SAINTS DAY

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the enemies of the aliens. HEBREWS xi. 32-34.



OD'S revelation is framed from end to end in the example and the lives of men, their characters and their careers. Patriarchs, judges, kings, poets, prophets pass before us in order. They are intrusted with messages from God, with successive revelations of His nature and will; but if we had not their biographies, frankly, freely told, nothing extenuated, and nothing set down in malice, to illustrate and commend those messages and revelations, how poor we should be, how incalculable our loss! Nay, we cannot conceive how the Bible could have been the Bible were it not written in the lives of men, with all their triumphs and disasters, all their strength and weakness. Every heavenly grace, such as love, is revealed to us in the persons of those who love: every theological mystery, such as faith, is illustrated in the lives of those who had it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds no more sure and satisfactory means of explaining what faith is than in enumerating the men of old time, who owed to it the secret of their power. 'By faith,' Abel; 'by faith,' Enoch; 'by faith,' Noah, won this or that victory over themselves or over the world. And instead of apologising for filling his pages with the praise of men, he only regrets that he has not space for more. 'Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, of Barak, and Samson, of David, and Samuel, and the prophets.' He implies that even these are but samples, samples of all those ('of whom the world was not worthy') who in a generation absorbed in its private interests and lusts, breathing the low atmosphere of an earthly life, were separate from the world in this, that they were fighting for an Ideal, driven on by a passionate faith in the God of Israel. 'Through faith they were subduing kingdoms, and 'out of weakness were made strong.'

I. This passage, as we all remember, is from one of the Lessons for the Festival of All Saints, and very precious it is in that connection, as helping us to keep our conception of the saintly function large and catholic, and as protecting us against the subtle temptation to identify the saintly ideal with any one type, congenial to ourselves, or perhaps our party. It is very salutary to be forced to recognise persons, the most various in character and temperament, as well as in

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powers and opportunities, as saints—saints, with all their failings and blemishes; saints, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews classes them, by virtue of the aim they set before them, the steadfastness with which they pursued it, the utter self-abnegation by which they met suffering and death for its sake. It forces us to recognise that God's kingdom in this world has been, in all times, advanced by men, in whom many of those ways and manners we have come to call specially 'saintly' were conspicuously absent. The writer of the Epistle before us chooses his specimens from what appears to us the rudest, roughest, most lawless period of Jewish history; when the manners of men, however ardent they were to defend the cause of the true God, could not have had that repose which stamps the caste of the modern saint—of the type we most naturally call saintly—the meditative, the calm, the devotional. When we study the lives of a Jephthah, a Samson, a Gideon, with all their strange, grotesque, and even forbidding incidents, and read that these men were the saints of whom the world was not worthy, the idea of an orderly, meek, resigned 'religious life' is, from the nature of the case, far enough off.

Certain technical associations have gathered about the phrase the 'religious life,' which ill suit with the character and career of a Samson. Yet his critic, in our text, includes him as living such a life, merely because he worked and suffered to keep alive the idea and the authority of a true God, a God of purity and righteousness, when the allurements of idolatry were all around drawing men away with a fearful destructiveness. The career of a Gideon impresses us indeed as that of a fearless soldier, possessed by an enthusiasm for God. He comes in truth nearer home to our sympathies, for we have known such soldier-saints in many an age nearer to our own. But the real work he did, the real work that all these men did, is told us more clearly by something that happened after his death than by all that we read of his personal actions. His biographer in the Book of Judges tells us this most significant fact, 'And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a-whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.' This is what the men called 'saints' do for their own generation, and for all generations, unless they utterly pass out of men's memories and records. They help, with all their varied gifts, talents, opportunities, to keep alive the claims of the true Lord on men's spirits, against the idolatries of the Canaan in which they live. This is the bond which unites and harmonises all these various personalities; which makes kin the centuries before Christ and the centuries after: this it is which stamps and defines the one quality of the saint: and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls it faith.

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He calls it faith, and his clear object is to show its identity with the power, bearing the same name, which Jesus Christ had brought with Him, as His greatest gift to men, 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith.' Faith, the one essential bond between saint and saint. And yet, this word of words, when divorced from human history and the triumphs it has won, how easily it dwindles into a theological abstraction, the topic of a thousand writers, the source and fount of a thousand controversies. How often has the word, separated from life and action, been

'Profaned by every charlatan,
And soiled by all ignoble use.'

And hence the inestimable boon of such a Scripture as this, where the unknown but learned and devout writer goes back a thousand years and more in his nation's history to find there the true essence and virtue of faith, and to commend it to men already entangling in the controversies of metaphysics. Did he already notice that faith, the central word (on man's side) in Old and New Testaments, and the connecting-link between them, was about to acquire new meanings and pass from out men's lives into their formulae, a thing to talk about, to study, and to analyse? Did he perceive that men might come to regard faith as something to live for, instead of something to live by; to cherish faith as itself 'an article of faith'; to (the instrument), in place of relying upon God? Was it for this that he pointed back to a state of society even then so remote and so different, to a state of society when theology and morals were as yet all but comprised in the simple alternative, 'If the Lord be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him'? Whatever the writer's motive, this course he took. He interpreted and commended the faith which Christ taught, by the faith of those ancient times, to show that the two were identical, and given to men for an identical purpose. New and fuller revelations of God had indeed come to men; faith was furnished with a wider, a deeper outlook, but its mission was the same always, to enable men to live above the world, and to win the world to follow them.

II. 'The time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak, of Samson and of Jephthah.' It is impossible to mistake the significant language in which this writer accentuates over and over again the one quality which knits together all these discordant elements into one bond of saintly work; almost as if he foresaw the narrowing tendency of diverging opinions to limit the saintly ideal. He even begins by defining faith in terms, independent of theologies, ancient or modern, and never to be affected by any changes of human knowledge or opinion. He makes that definition as wide, as all-

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embracing as it can be. Faith (I quote from our Revised Version) 'is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.'

Nothing can be simpler, more beyond all cavilling. It is the acting upon a conviction of things we do not see, as if we did see them, and the proving the truth of them by tests more certain than eyesight. And immediately after, he adds another fragment of description, which shall still further serve to keep true faith distinct from all counterfeits. 'He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Now the first of these utterances, if we really accept it, should keep our conception of the saint large; if, that is to say, the saint is the man or woman who keeps his or her faith unshaken in the midst of a faithless world. I began by saying that our natural bias is to attach to certain forms and expressions of holiness the name of saintly. And the Scripture for All Saints Day most wisely brings together, side by side, the most opposite—or rather all the complementary aspects—of the saintly life. While in the Lesson we are reminded of Gideon, Samson, and Barak; in the Gospel for the day, we are referred, by the enumeration of our Lord's beatitudes, to the gentler, more passive graces, of the saint. 'Blessed are the meek; blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Here is the saintly type after our own heart: we do with all our heart and soul recognise in such as these the reflection of the holiness and purity of God. It is only when we turn in thought from these to the saints who seem so little like them, in the Book of Judges, that we need the larger definition of the saint, as one who has faith while the world has none, to keep us from confusion and disillusion. We know indeed no more of a man like Samson than the stirring record of his outward fortunes; but if the saint be the meek, the student of holiness, the hungerer and thirster after righteousness, who shall reconcile the two conceptions? No one, nothing, save the clew which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us, faith the one touch of 'grace' that makes all God's servants 'kin.' Not alone by faith do men subdue kingdoms; by faith also they subdue themselves: not only by faith do they overcome their enemies; by faith also they overcome the world. In fighting for others' salvation, or their own, they are alike doing the saints' office, and are true to the work given them to do, which is different for every man. And all alike must suffer. Suffering is the badge of all their tribe. Faith, the starting-point, suffering the inevitable condition; these are the same for all, whether it be a Gideon fighting for a God of Israel against Baalim, or the mourner for his own sin and weakness, weeping in loneliness through the midnight hours. Let neither of these

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deny to his fellow the name of saint, or the ministry of saintliness. Each has his work to do, each does it imperfectly, and through failures, disappointments, and humiliations. The saint is not a faultless creature, either in himself or in his methods. But he believes something which the world does not believe, and lives above the world, and of him the world is not worthy.

Let us strive to keep our conception of the saint wide and catholic. Let us love to trace the saintly function, not chiefly among those who share our methods and our views, but among those furthest removed from such. For in the presence of that word faith, all walls of party should fall to the ground. There are those who will resent this advice, and take alarm lest if we widen the area of saintliness we should be in danger of lowering its standard. I believe the very opposite of this to be the truth. Keeping firmly hold of faith as the one essential test of the saint's work, we shall be best able to distinguish the true faith from the spurious, the true saint from the sham. Wherever faith is seen in action, there is a saint of God at work. Wherever in lonely village, in squalid court, the sorely-tormented man is labouring for God's sake to preserve his honesty: wherever the friendless and starving woman is struggling to be pure, because the vision of the Holy One is ever before her, there is the saint. It is only when faith is a watchword and a sentiment, but nothing more, that, however sweet and sentimental the environment, the saintliness has lost its savour, and is useless to the world. It has no regenerative, no contagious virtue. That is not the faith that kindles other faith, and hands on the torch along the march of men.

It is our great men, who have the gift of faith, who help us to have it and to live above the world. Let us cherish their memory, and speak of them and honour them. And not the least precious among these are our poets; for when they pass away, their power remains, and even widens, and is strengthened. 'Their place is changed, they are the same.' They do not 'die to us, although they die.' Yet we dare not worship them, or make a religion out of them; for the worship of any God short of the highest means degradation and corruption. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' They are not the light, they but reflect the light. 'Jesus Christ is to me,' said Tennyson one day, 'as is the sun to yonder flower.' So must it be to us, for power comes from the source, not from the colour, beauty, charm of the reflection. 'And the Light was the life of men.'

CANON AINGER.

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